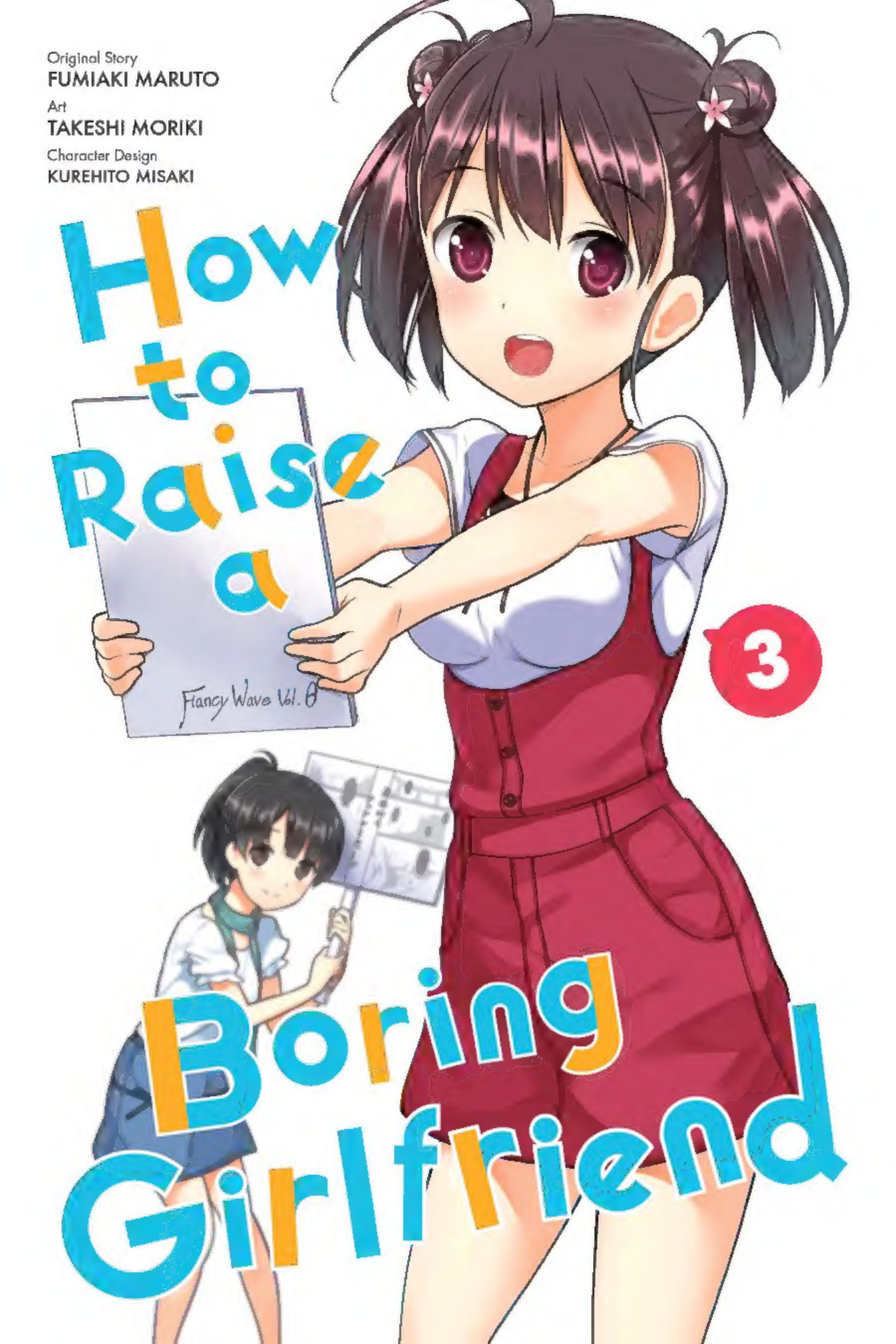
Original Story
FUMIAKI MARUTO
Art
TAKESHI MORIKI
Character Design
KUREHITO MISAKI

How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend

3



How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend

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How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend

Original Story
FUMIAKI MARUTO
Art
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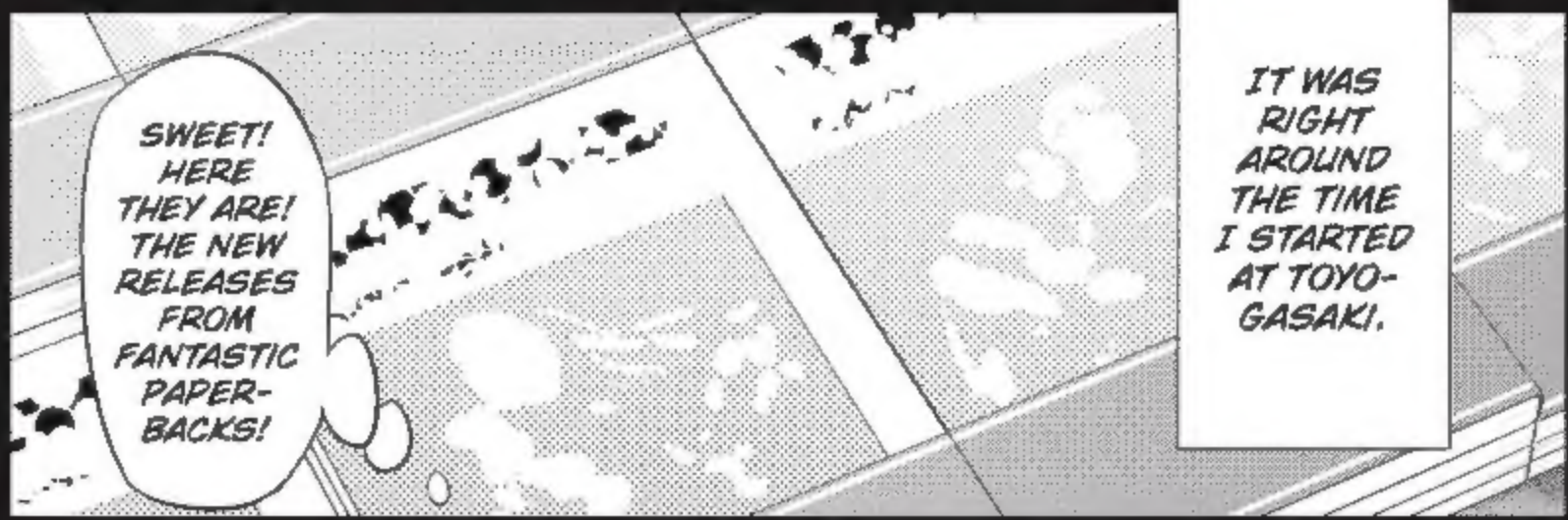
Character Design
KUREHITO MISAKI

How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend

Volume Three

Presented by
Fumiaki Maruto &
Takeshi Moriki

Character Design by
Kurehito Misaki


SWEET! HERE THEY ARE! THE NEW RELEASES FROM FANTASTIC PAPER-BACKS!
IT WAS RIGHT AROUND THE TIME I STARTED AT TOYO-GASAKI.

WHAT A HAUL!

ONOME IN LOVE
ASUMI
... TURNED OUT TO BE—

40TH
FANTA
MOST
"THE DEBUT FROM THE WINNER OF THE 40TH FANTASTIC PAPER-BACKS' MOST PROMISING NEWCOMER AWARD!" HM?
THE SINGLE VOLUME I CASUALLY PICKED THAT I KNEW NOTHING ABOUT .....

CHAPTER
11

THIS IS WAGOUSHI! WAGOUSHI STATION!

WELL, IT WAS LATE WHEN I LEFT KATOU.

AL-READY PRETTY DARK OUT.

SENPAI'S DEFINITELY AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE .....

GOTTA KEEP MY EYES PEELED..... IF SHE SLIPS PAST ME, IT'S ALL OVER.

I GUESS IT MAKES SENSE HER MOM COULDN'T JUST TELL ME OUTRIGHT WHERE SHE WENT.

In Wa-goushi, I think it was?

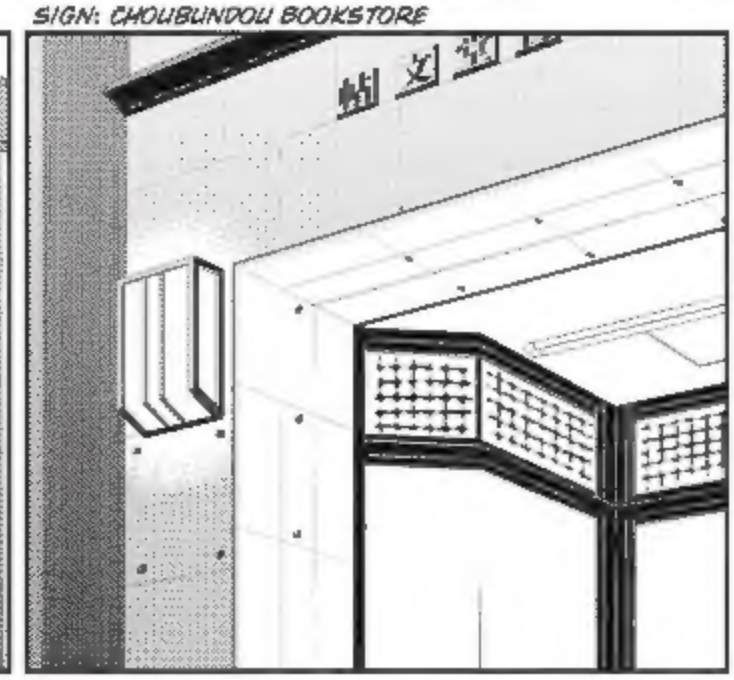
Oh? You're a friend of Utaha's? I think she said she was going to meet some-one.

BUT IT WAS A HELP ANYWAY!

IF I DON'T, I'LL.....

I WANT TO TALK TO UTAHA-SENPAI TODAY, NO MATTER WHAT.

I NEED TO TELL HER MY THOUGHTS ASAP.



BANNER: UTAKO KASUMI SIGNING

IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU! I'M SO OVER-WHELMED, KASUMI-SENSEI!

IT WAS LAST SUMMER ..... AT THE SIGNING FOR THE RELEASE OF THE SECOND VOLUME .....

COME TO THINK OF IT, ... THIS IS WHERE WE FIRST MET.....

TH-THANK YOU.....

I'M A HUGE FAN OF METRO-NOME IN LOVE!

I'VE READ THE FIRST ONE OVER TWENTY TIMES!

BEING FIRST WAS LUCKY FOR ME!

BUT MORE THAN HALF THE TICKETS ARE STILL AVAILABLE.

I HEAR YOU LINED UP REALLY EARLY?

I STILL CRY EVERY WEEK WHEN I READ IT!

O..... OHH .....

I SEE .....

FUWAA (BLUSH)

I SEE!

C'MON, PLEASE— GIMME A BREAK! FOR REAL!

AFTER THAT, WE STARTED MEETING IN WAGOUSHI A LOT.....
WcDonald's
CRAP!
NEXT SPOT!

IT'S JUST A LITTLE STORY IN A NOVEL.
DON'T MAKE A SCENE HERE.
WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN!?
THAT CLIFF-HANGER IN VOLUME THREE..... WHERE ARE YOU GOING WITH IT .....?

IS IT REALLY OKAY FOR ME TO SAY?
HUH? WHAT?
TOMOYA-KUN, WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE HAPPEN?

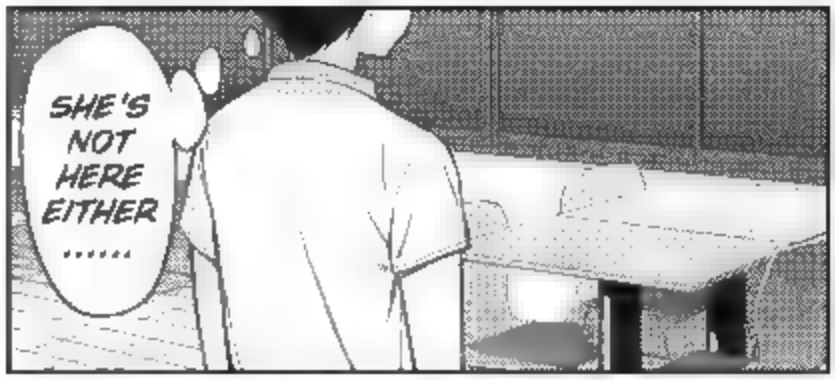
THAT'S IT, HUH .....?
AT THE VERY LEAST, THEY'RE WORTH CONSIDER-ING.
IT'S NATURAL FOR AN AUTHOR TO LISTEN TO HER READERS' THOUGHTS AND DESIRES, ISN'T IT?

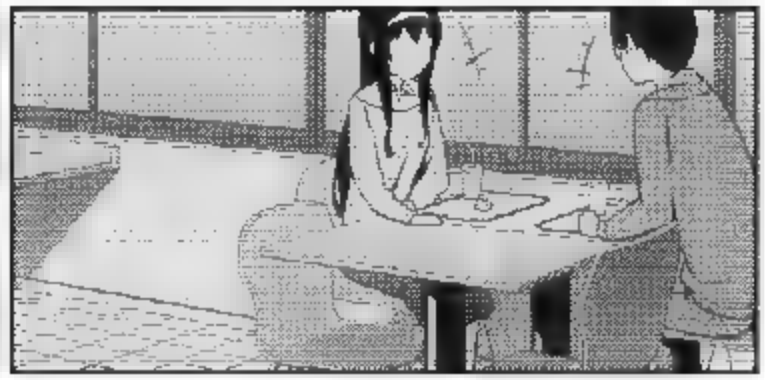
UH, YEAH, TO A GOD MAYBE!

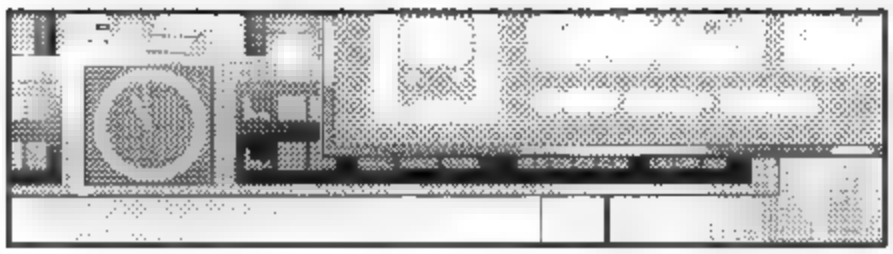
.....A WRITER PULLS MATERIAL FROM EVERY FACET OF NORMAL LIFE!

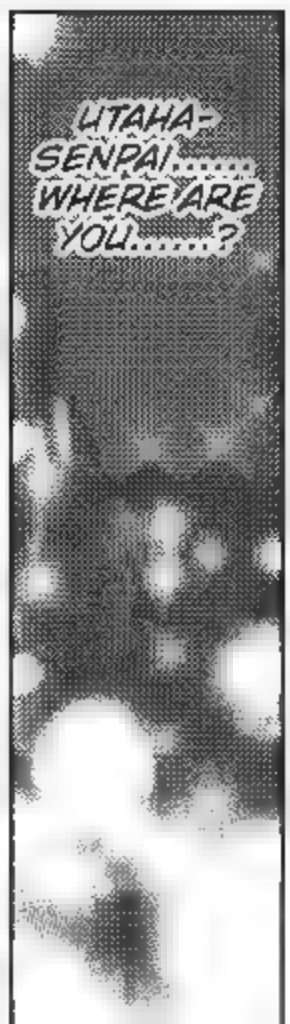
IT WAS EXACTLY WHAT I TOLD YOU I'D IMAGINED BEFORE, WASN'T IT?

OH, NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, THE RAIN SCENE DIALOGUE IN THIS VOLUME...









I CAN'T READ THIS!

IF I DON'T FIND HER BEFORE THAT, I'LL JUST HAVE TO GIVE UP FOR TODAY .....

IF I DON'T CATCH ONE OF THESE TRAINS, I WON'T BE ABLE TO GET HOME EITHER .....

BUT.....

WHY .....?

HOW COME...? I DON'T WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENS.

I WANT YOU TO READ IT BEFORE THE REST OF THE WORLD DOES.

IT'S ALL RIGHT. I KNOW YOU WON'T LEAK IT TO ANYONE, AND I GOT PERMISSION FROM MY EDITOR TOO.

.....

I WAS HOPING TO GET YOUR SEAL OF APPROVAL ...

... TOMOYA-KUN.

THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR.
BUT THAT'S JUST BLIND ADULATION.

THEN WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME, SENPAI .....?

ONCE THE FINAL VOLUME'S OUT, I'LL BUY IT AND TELL YOU MY EVERY THOUGHT.
AND NO MATTER WHAT DEVEL-OPMENTS TAKE PLACE, I'LL ALWAYS APPROVE BECAUSE YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WROTE THEM.

...AND WHAT KIND OF REACTION YOU'LL GIVE ME.
I WANT TO KNOW HOW THE CONCLUSION MAKES YOU FEEL.....

"MAYBE" .....?
..... MAYBE.
YOU'LL KNOW IF YOU READ IT.

...THIS FIRST DRAFT OF THE FINAL VOLUME?
WON'T YOU PLEASE READ...
I'LL ASK YOU AGAIN, OKAY—?

I MEAN, I...
... CAN'T BE RESPON-SIBLE FOR THIS BOOK.
WHY NOT .....?
.....!
.....I DECLINE.

YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY?
..... AGH!

.....

YOU REALLY NEED ME TO SAY IT!?

IT'S OBVIOUSLY 'COS I'M SUCH A HUGE FAN!

I HAVE TO TALK TO HER..... BEFORE THE DAY'S OUT!

SO..... I HAVE TO SEE HER.....

ZUBASHI (THWAP)

PITO (STOP)

MOSQUITO

MUUUN (BZZZ)

I NEVER LOOKED *THERE* .....

ARRRGGH!

OH .....!

THEN, ABOUT THE PROTAG-ONIST...

GOING BACK TO THE LOVE TRIANGLE IN MY PREVIOUS WORK—

DON (BAM)

DON

DON

?

DON

DON

DON

DON

SENPAAAI!!!

1325
SHAAAAAAAA (FWSSSSSSH)
HUH!?
HOW'D I END UP HERE?
SHAAAAA
WHAAAAAT!?

...AND FOR SOME REASON, SHE BROUGHT ME TO ROOM 25 ON THE THIRTEENTH FLOOR (A SINGLE ROOM, ANYWAY YOU LOOK AT IT)!

THEN, SENPAI SAID, "COME WITH ME," SO I MINDLESSLY FOLLOWED HER...

THE RESTAURANT CLOSED AT MIDNIGHT, SO WE LEFT.

SHE WAS HAVING A MEETING WITH HER EDITOR.

WAITING FOR HER AT THE STATION

LOOKING FOR UTAHA-SENPAI, I WOUND UP AT A DINER ON THE FIRST FLOOR OF A HOTEL.

AND HERE I AM.

Sonoko Machida 町田苑子

Fushikawa Publishing Corporation
Fushikawa Fantastic Paperbacks

SO YOU'RE REAL! YOU'RE TAKI-KUN!

I'D LIKE YOU TO DROP DEAD RIGHT ABOUT NOW.

HOW CAN YOU BE SO COLD TO ME AFTER I LOOKED EVERYWHERE FOR YOU!?

ACK!

GACHA (KACHAKO)

SUTA (STEP)

SUTA

NOW, THEN..... RINRI-KUN.

Y-YES .....

SUTA

FINE, WHAT-EVER.

..... AGH!

GISHI (CREAK)

THE SMELL OF SOAP.....

...AND SHAMPOO.....

WHAT EXACTLY DOES THAT EDITOR GET OUT OF THIS .....?

WHAT IS WITH THE PERFECT TEAMWORK!?

MACHIDA-SAN JUST TOOK CARE OF THE FORMALITIES. HERE'S HER MESSAGE.

BUT YOU ARE NOW, SEE?

I'M NOT EVEN A GUEST HERE!

I MEAN, I SHOULD GO! I'M IMPOSING ON YOU!

サササッ

SASA (SCURRY)

HEY, RINRI-KUN?

DID YOU COME HERE LOOKING FOR ME?

Y-YES .....?

NO. WELL .....

...YES.

AND YOU EVEN MISSED THE LAST TRAIN?

UH... YES.

YOU'RE SUCH AN IDIOT.....

..... UM, I GUESS .....

YES.

ON A DATE WITH KATOU-SAN?

I WENT TO THE ROKU-TENBA MALL TODAY.

...AND I SUDDENLY STARTED FEELING SICK AS SOON AS WE GOT THERE .....

あぁあたく

GUTAAAAAA (LIMP)

IT HASN'T BEEN OPEN FOR LONG, SO IT WAS RIDICU-LOUSLY BUSY...

.....

IT MIGHT'VE BEEN THAT, BUT I WAS DOING RESEARCH.

YES. VERY.

BUT STILL .....

...IT WAS FUN, RIGHT?

SHE SHOPPED TO HER HEART'S CONTENT WITHOUT REINING IT IN FOR ME...

WHEN I WAS DOWN, SHE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT ME, LIKE PERSON GETS...

YEAH. IT WAS SO FUN THAT I WAS ABLE TO ANSWER WITHOUT HESITATION.

AND THAT'S WHY I WANT YOU TO REVISE IT.....

YOUR PLOT.

.....UM, I'LL JUST REPHRASE IT AS "AWESOME," THEN.
URK...
THOSE ALL MEAN THE SAME THING.

IT WAS MAGNIFI-CENT! IT WAS ON SUCH A GRAND SCALE! IT WAS OVER-FLOWING WITH EPICNESS .....
YOUR PLOT WAS DEFINITELY GREAT!

IF YOU THINK THAT HIGHLY OF IT, WHY REVISE?

WE'LL BE TOGETHER FOREVER, WON'T WE, ONII-CHAN?
ONLY THE LITTLE SISTER FROM THE PREVIOUS LIFE COMES BACK. THERE'S NO ENDING WHERE THE NORMAL GIRL CLASSMATE MAKES IT BACK!
WHAT IT DOESN'T HAVE IS A RETURN TO NOR-MALCY.
THE PLOT ONLY REVOLVES AROUND A DESTINY THAT SPANS GENERA-TIONS.

THE FOUNDA-TION OF THE STORY THAT BUILT UP OVER ALL THE GENER-ATIONS WOULD CRUMBLE, DON'T YOU SEE!?
AND IF RURI WAS ERASED, THEN THE STUFF IN THE PAST WOULD BECOME MEANING-LESS.
BECAUSE IF I DIDN'T, THEN THE KID SISTER FROM THE PREVIOUS LIFE WOULD VANISH!
WHY DID YOU LET THAT CUTE, ORDINARY GIRL DIE?
WHY DID YOU MAKE IT THAT WAY?

IN THE EVERYDAY PART OF THE STORY, HE WAS CLOSE TO MEGURI BEFORE HER MEMORIES STARTED COMING BACK!

BUT AREN'T BOTH RURI AND MEGURI IMPORTANT TO THE MAIN CHARACTER RIGHT NOW?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

.....BUT WHETHER OR NOT THAT'S PRESENT-DAY MEGURI IS UP FOR DEBATE.

IT'S NOT LIKE THOSE MEMORIES HAVE NO IMPACT ON THE MAKEUP OF PRESENT-DAY MEGURI'S PERSONALITY!

WELL, MEGURI WAS BORN WITH INHERITED MEMORIES OF THE PAST.

!

...IT'S NOT OKAY FOR HER PRESENT-DAY SELF AND ALL HER MEMORIES TO JUST BE SNUFFED OUT!

EVEN IF THAT'S TRUE...

THAT PART OF HER THAT'S ALL HER OWN—THE THOUGHTS, HISTORY, MEMORIES SHE'S LIVED WITH...

...SHOULDN'T THAT BE MORE PRECIOUS!?

...AND SURE, MAYBE THEY CHANGE HER LIFE, AND SHE FALLS FOR HER DESTINED LOVE FROM A PREVIOUS INCARNATION.

OF COURSE MEGURI'S TROUBLED BY HER PAST MEMORIES AND IS AT THEIR MERCY...

BUT! SHE WAS BORN LIKE EVERYONE ELSE, WENT TO SCHOOL LIKE EVERYONE ELSE, FELL IN LOVE LIKE EVERYONE ELSE.....

IF MEGURI WAS THERE, I THINK EVEN AN "AWAY GAME" WOULD BE FUN.

IF KATOU— I MEAN, MEGURI .....

...THIS ARGUMENT WOULD SEEM ABSURD TO ANYONE ON THE OUTSIDE.

ORDINARY LIFE WITH MEGURI WOULD BE REALLY ENJOYABLE IF YOU ASK ME!

THEY MIGHT STILL JUST BE NOTES ON PAPER, BUT I'M STARTING TO TAKE THE LIVES OF THESE CHARACTERS SERIOUSLY.

I'M WORRIED ABOUT THEM, AND I'M TRYING TO LEAD THEM TO HAPPI-NESS.

SO I DON'T WANT THEM TO LOSE OUT TO DESTINY! I WANT THEM TO GET THEIR NORMAL LIVES BACK!

CHEESY, ARDENT, CREEPY ...

A FOOLISH BUT LOVABLE RACE .....

I WANT THE ORDI-NARY GIRL FROM SCHOOL .....

I WANT MEGURI TO HAVE AN ENDING TOO!

BUT, KATOU..... NOW I CAN SAY IT LOUD AND CLEAR!

CROARO

I WANT A ROUTE WHERE NORMAL, AVERAGE LOVE WINS OVER DESTINY FROM A PAST LIFE!

THAT'S WHAT DEFINES AN OTAKU! THERE, I SAID IT AT LAST!

IN THAT CASE, IT'D BE BETTER TO REDO IT FROM SCRATCH .....

I'LL JUST HAVE TO GIVE UP ON IT ALL.

.....
AS AN OTAKU, SENPAI HAS HER OWN STUBBORN HANG-UPS TOO
.....

.....
THAT'S RIGHT.
OHH
.....

LEAVE HER.
RI-RINRI-KUN?
AND I'M REALLY INTO HOW THEIR RELATIONSHIP IS ALWAYS AFFECTED BY THE PAST.
I KNOW I SAID I FEEL SORRY FOR MEGURI, BUT RURI'S TOTALLY HOT.
HUH .....?

SO? WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT!?

..... HMPH! YOU JUST HAVE NO STAN-DARDS!

.....!

AND BEING CALLED "ONII-CHAN" OR "ONII-SAMA" IS FREAKING SWEET TOO.

THE IDEA OF HER COMING AFTER ME BLINDLY GETS ME ALL WORRIED ABOUT HER.

YOU CAN GO FOR EITHER GIRL.

THAT WAY, IT'LL CATER TO A WIDER RANGE OF USER DESIRES.

HEH HEH .....

IT'S SENPAI'S USUAL FACE AGAIN!

GREAT!

SO WE'LL START ON THE PLOT REVAMP RIGHT AWAY, OKAY!?
YES!
...SO ALL THE WAY THROUGH, EVEN AT THE VERY END, YOU CAN CHOOSE EITHER MEGURI OR RURI!
WE'LL ADD IN MORE CHOICES ...

I'M GOING TO SHUT MYSELF IN HERE AND GET TO WORK.
GACHA (KACHAK)
WRITING THE PLOT MAKES ME... UM.....

OKAY, WHY DON'T YOU GET SOME SLEEP?
HUH? WHAT ABOUT YOU?

OH .....!
GO
GO (RUMBLE)

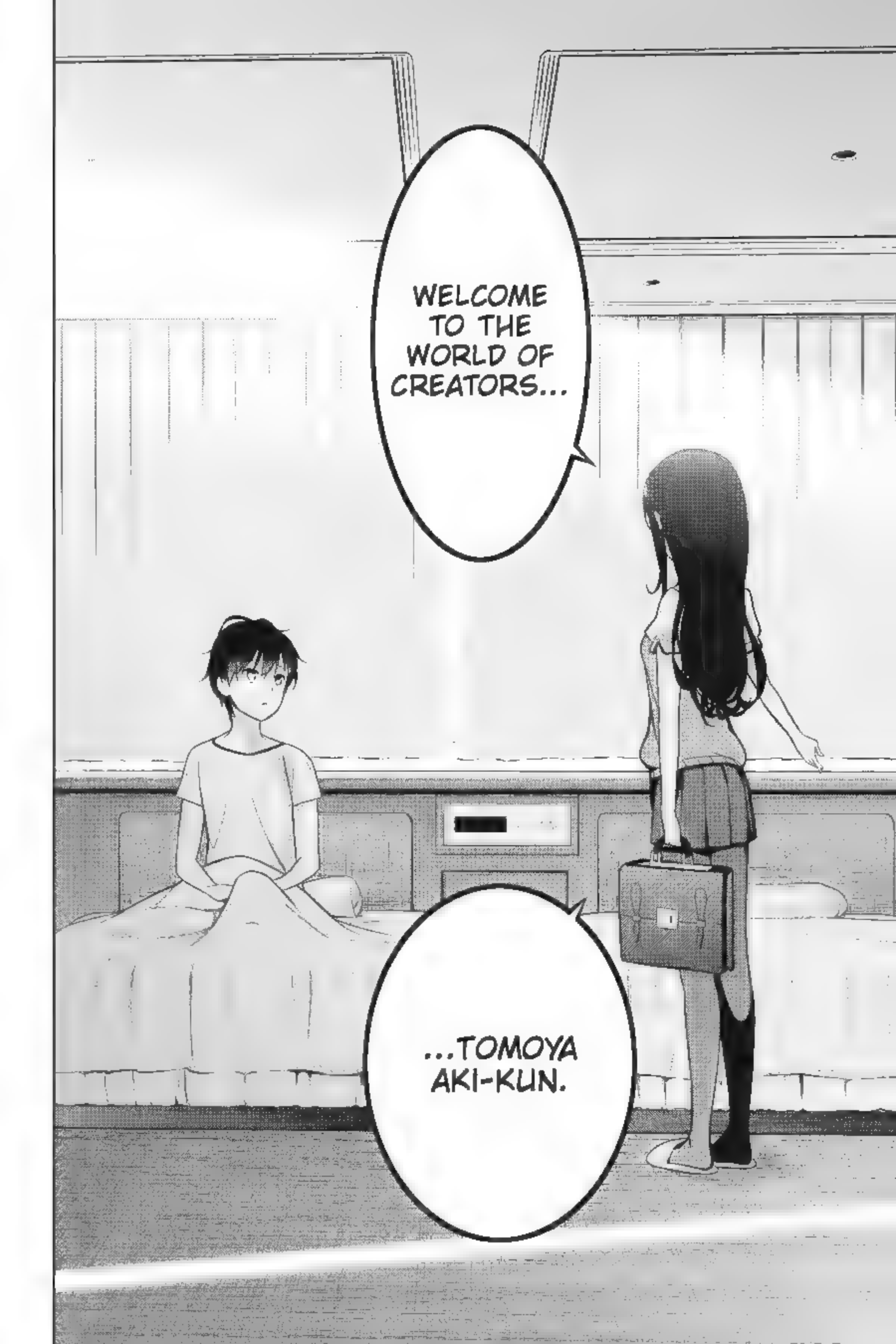
RINRI-KUN.
IT'S NATURAL FOR A DIRECTOR TO STICK CLOSE TO A CREATOR WHEN IT'S RIGHT BEFORE THE DEADLINE, RIGHT?
NO, IT'S FINE. YOU CAN WRITE IN HERE.

THERE'S SOME NON-MEGURI DIALOGUE GETTING MIXED UP IN THERE TOO!
WHAT'RE YOU TRYING TO SAY!? A WRITER CAN'T FALL IN LOVE!? A WRITER CAN'T GET SERIOUS WITH A FAN!?
I LOVE YOU SO MUCH! WHY DON'T MY FEELINGS REACH YOU!?
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT GIRL! SHE JUST CAME OUT OF NOWHERE AND STOLE MY MAN!
CRAP! CRAP! CRAP!
THAT'S WHAT I WENT AND SAID, BUT...
...A CREATOR'S TRUE NATURE... IS REALLY SCARY.
S-SENPAI!
KATA
KATA (KTAK)
END

CHAPTER 12

AM 7:54

-YAWN-


WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF CREATORS...
...TOMOYA AKI-KUN.

I KNOW YOU CAN DO THIS.

WE GOT THIS.

LET'S WORK OUR-SELVES TO THE BONE, OKAY?

YOUR ENTHU-SIASM GOT ME SERIOUS ABOUT THIS TOO AFTER ALL.

...YOU BET!

TWO WEEKS LATER

THIS PLOT'S THE BEST ...!

THANK YOOOU, UTAHA-SENPAI!

THE PROB-LEM NOW'S THE CHAR-ACTER DESIGN, HUH?

HMMM.

SUMMER VACATION STARTS TOMORROW, AND IF I DON'T SORT OUT A CLUBROOM, ERIRI WON'T BE ABLE TO GET ANY WORK DONE...

OH! MORN-ING, AKI-KUN!

HI, KA—

AHHH ...!

JUST IMAG-INING IT.....

...GETS ME ALL WORKED UP!

BAN (BAM)
TOUUUUUU!?
?
BISHII (JAB)
WHY DID YOU CHANGE YOUR HAIR NOW!?
WE ALREADY DECIDED THAT THE CHARACTER WOULD HAVE A SHORT BOB!
OBJEC-TION!

YOU MEAN I HAVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE AN OPENING STATEMENT AT THIS MOCK TRIAL THAT RANDOMLY UNFOLDED BEFORE MY EYES...?

SAY WHAT ...?

DOES THE ACCUSED HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY FOR HERSELF?

AKI-KUN, YOUR CHAR-ACTER'S EVEN LESS ESTAB-LISHED THAN MINE.

THE ACCUSED WILL REFRAIN FROM MAKING META OUT-BURSTS!

THAT'S PROB-LEMATIC... WE CAN'T HAVE A HEARING LIKE THIS.

THE DEFEN-DANT MUST CLEARLY UNDER-STAND HER POSITION.

YOUR HONOR, IT APPEARS THIS CHILD STILL HAS NO IDEA WHAT SHE'S DONE.

YOU DECIDED TO INCREASE MY WORK-LOAD ON A WHIM!?

YOU FELT LIKE !!!T!?

OH, UM, I'M SORRY ABOUT THA—

IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME, HM?

HUH? UMM...

I WILL ASK YOU AGAIN! WHY DID YOU SUDDENLY CHANGE YOUR HAIR-STYLE!?

JUST FELT LIKE IT, I GUESS?

.....
DIDN'T YOU?
.....UH, MAYBE I DID.
KOOOOO (RUMBLE)
ZO (CHILL)
NAH, I WASN'T REALLY THINKING THAT KAR—
CHAR-ACTER DESIGN IS EASIER TO DO WITH MOTIFS .....
IN OTHER WORDS, YOU WENT WITH THE PONYTAIL FOR SAWAMURA-SAN'S SAKE, DIDN'T YOU?
UGH, ENOUGH! ORDER IN THE COURT!
YOU'RE ONLY SAYING THAT 'COS YOU THINK IT'S FUN TRYING TO GET A RISE OUTTA ME, RIGHT!?
BUT AS HER COUNSEL, IT'S ONLY NATURAL FOR ME TO CHIME IN, RIGHT?
NO FURTHER UNCALLED-FOR REMARKS PLEASE, UTAHA KASUMI-GAOKA!
OBJEC-TION! LEADING THE WIT-NESS!
WHY DON'T YOU JUST PASS DOWN A JUDGMENT BASED ON YOUR OWN OPINION, YOUR HONOR?
SO NOW WHAT .....?
WE'LL NEVER REACH A VERDICT LIKE THIS, YOU KNOW?
...

UM, WHAT I MEAN IS...
HUH .....?
...BOILS DOWN TO WHETHER OR NOT IT SUITS ME, RIGHT?
...THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THIS STYLE IS GUILTY OR INNOCENT...
HUH!?

I SEE. SHE HAS A POINT .....
I AGREE TO THE ACCUSED'S PROPOSAL.
WHAAAT!?

"DO YOU THINK THIS HAIR LOOKS GOOD ON ME, AKI-KUN?"
IN OTHER WORDS, I NEED TO EXPRESS HOW I FEEL ABOUT KATOU'S HAIR-STYLE.
THE POINT OF CONTEN-TION IS WHETHER OR NOT THE HAIRSTYLE SUITS HER.
I, THE JUDGE, AM THE ONE WHO HANDS DOWN THE VER-DICT.
ACK!!
はっ

HOLD UP, YOU GUYS!
I HAVE NO OBJEC-TIONS.

JIIIIII (STARE)

...
KA-KATOU ...?

SORRY, THIS IS WHERE I CALL FOR A MISTRIAL, MMKAY?

THAT IT IS!

WHEW, FIRST TERM'S OVER!

WHAT ABOUT OUR USUAL CAFE? WE CAN HAVE TEA WHILE WE WORK.

MY WALLET COULDN'T HANDLE IT.

BESIDES, THERE'S COMIKET TO THINK ABOUT IN AUGUST.

SASA (SWISH)

SASA

DID YOU NOT GET AN OKAY TO USE THE AV ROOM?

NO.

WHAT DO I DO ABOUT A CLUBROOM OVER BREAK?

TAKE CARE OF YOUR-SELVES!

GOOD-BYE SAKA-MURA-SAN!

OH, HEY! KATOU, SINCE I'M GOING ANYWAY, WHY DON'T YOU COME WITH.....?

TOMOYA-SENPA! .....?

YEAH, IT'S A DOUJINSHI SALES FAIR.

"COMI-KET"?

I'M BACK ...!

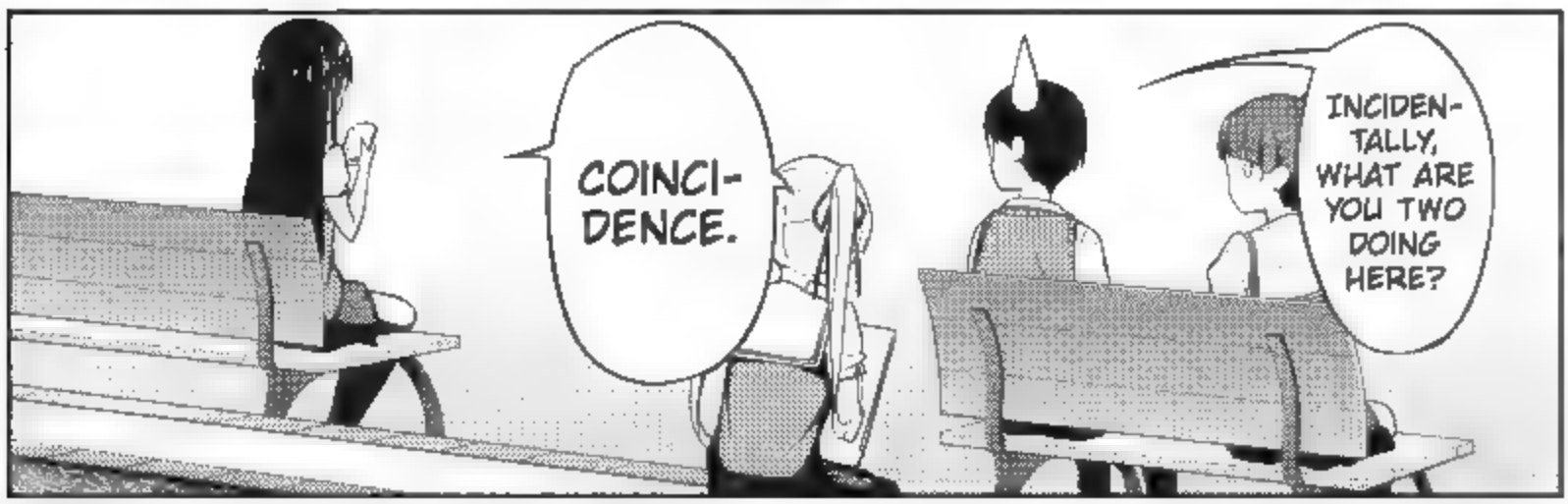
IT IS YOU, TOMOYA-SENPAI!

I'VE COME BACK TO YOU, SENPAI!

I FINALLY FOUND YOU!

OOH! FOUND A BALL!
SENPAI! SENPAI!
C'MON, TOMOYA-SENPAI! PLAY WITH ME!
BURUN (BOUNCE)
BARUN (JIGGLE)
UH, WELL .....
SHE'S A KOUHAI OF YOURS FROM MIDDLE SCHOOL, AKI-KUN?
NOT QUITE, BUT KINDA, YEAH.
HER NAME'S IZUMI HASHIMA.

DID YOU KNOW ABOUT HER, SAWAMURA-SAN?
MIIN (BUZZ)
MIIN
MIIN
AS IF. WE DIDN'T GO TO THE SAME ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, AND SHE'S TWO YEARS LOWER.
AND SHE MOVED AWAY TO NAGOYA BEFORE MIDDLE SCHOOL.
KARI (SCRITCH)
KARI
KARI
SEEMS LIKE YOU KNOW LOTS ABOUT HER.....


INCIDENTALLY, WHAT ARE YOU TWO DOING HERE?
COINCIDENCE.

WELL, YOU USED TO HAVE SHORT HAIR, AND YOU WERE ALWAYS CRAZY-TAN FROM BEING OUT IN THE SUN.
YEAH, I WAS A TOTAL TOMBOY BACK THEN, HUH?
YEAH, EXACTLY!

ANYWAY, YOU'VE REALLY CHANGED, IZUMI-CHAN.
HUH!? YOU THINK!?

IZUMI WAS ONLY THE SECOND FEMALE FRIEND I'D EVER HAD IN MY LIFE.

WHEN I WAS LITTLE, I BECAME FRIENDS WITH HER IN A VERY DIFFERENT WAY THAN I HAD WITH THE GIRLIE ERIRI.....

...UH, YEAH.

HM?

DID I GET A BIT MORE LADY-LIKE?

MIIIN

MIIIN

BUT IF THAT'S TRUE .....

...IF I'M A REAL GIRL NOW .....

...IT WAS YOUR DOING, SENPAI.

HUH!?

YOU TAUGHT ME THE PLEASURES OF BEING A WOMAN .....

...DIDN'T YOU?

WHEN WE WERE LITTLE...

...YOU HAD ALL KINDS OF FUN WITH ME HERE, REMEMBER?

IZUMI-CHAN?

SHADY FUN IN THE PARK WITH A LITTLE GIRL .....

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE, RINRI-KUN .....? WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU ARE .....!?

GIRI (GRIND)

GIRI

GIRI

THIS IS MY FIRST TIME SEEING KATOU RECOIL LIKE THAT!

GEH ...!

A-AKI-KUN ...?

I'M SO GLAD TO SEE YOU AGAIN .....

I KNEW IT WAS YOU RIGHT AWAY. YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT, TOMOYA-SENPAI .....

R-R-REALLY ?

GARI (SCRAPE)

GARI

GARI

AHA..... NOW WE KNOW WHY HE DOESN'T CONSIDER OLD LADIES LIKE YOU DATING MATERIAL, HUH...

...UTAHA KASUMI-GAOKA?

SO, TOMOYA-SENPAI .....

GOSO (DIG)

...PLEASE ACCEPT THIS!

...A LOVE LETTER OF THE SORT THAT BREAKS OUT INTO AN ALTERNATE ROUTE!?

DON'T TELL ME THIS IS...

I-IZUMI-CHAN .....!?

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DAY TWO, EAST HALL, HO-04A, "FANCY WAVE"?

.....

LEMME GUESS— YOU THOUGHT ANOTHER ROUTE HAD OPENED UP?

TOO BAD!

I CAN'T BELIEVE SHE GAVE ME A COMIKET CIRCLE TICKET AS A PRESENT!

NO, IT'S AN OTOME GAME. FOR GIRLS.

?

Y'KNOW, KATOU, I WOULDN'T TALK ABOUT IT SO CASUALLY IF I WERE YOU—

HEY, AKI-KUN.

IS *LITTLE* YADDA YADDA ANOTHER DATING SIM FOR GUYS?

HER WORK'S BASED ON LITTLE LOVE RHAPSODY, *HUH.....?*

IT'S NOT "YADDA YADDA"! IT'S *LITTLE LOVE RHAP-SODY!*

LITTLE! LOVE! RHAP-SODY!!

YIKES! WITH THAT HORRIBLE FACE SHE'S MAKING, YOU'D THINK SHE WAS TALKING TO SOME KINDA RELIGIOUS ZEALOT.

WOW..... AND IT SEEMS YOU TOTALLY DON'T REGRET ANY OF IT.

SO I FEEL LIKE I CAN'T THANK HIM ENOUGH!

PRETTY PLEASE!

SO, SENPAI! SUMMER COMIKET!

PLEASE!

I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IZUMI-CHAN'S LATEST.

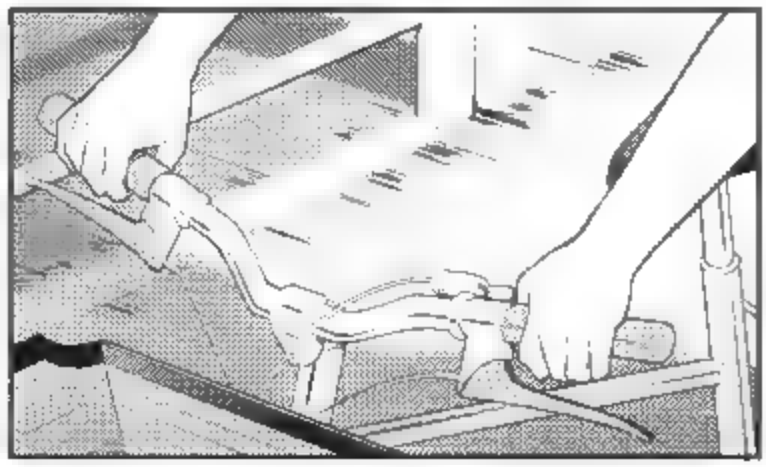
PRETTY, PRETTY PLEASE WITH A CHERRY ON TOP! YOU HAVE TO COME!

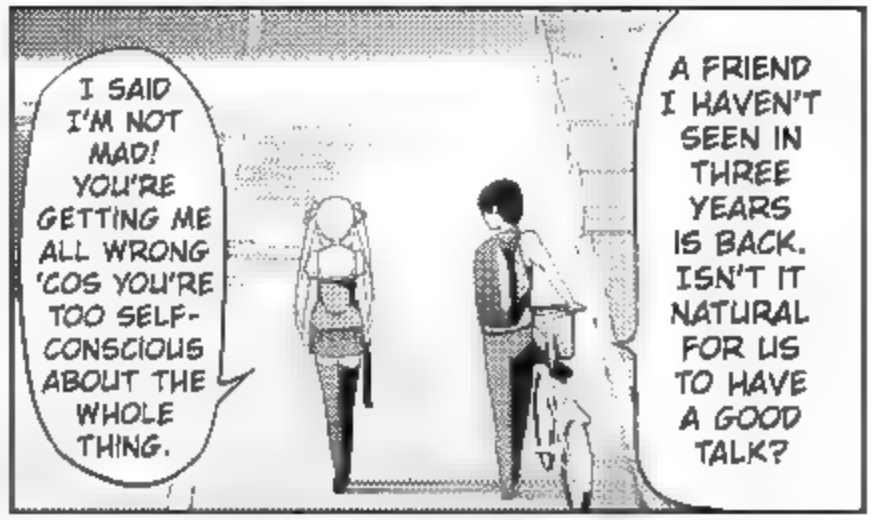
ZEEE
ZEEE
ZEEE (WHEEZE)

DON'T YOU THINK THAT DIS-RESPECTFUL ATTITUDE CONTRIB-UTES TO SOCIETY'S LOW OPINION OF OTAKU!?

THAT KINDA THOUGHT-LESSNESS IS WHY THE SOCIAL STANDING OF OTAKU NEVER IMPROVES!

HEY! WHY THE HELL DID YOU LEAVE ME BEHIND!?





LITRHAP IS, YOU KNOW .....

.....

TOMO-YA!

LITTLE LOVE RHAP-SODY IS A REGIS-TERED TRADE-MARK OF THE SONAR CORP.

THAT'S THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT, RIGHT?

I MEAN, IT'S .....!

...IT'S FAMOUS. AND?

YOU KNOW FULL WELL WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY HERE!

YOU KNOW .....

WAIT, AM I WRONG?

WHY ARE YOU BEING LIKE THIS TO ME NOW .....?

.....

LONG TIME NO SEE, YOU TWO.
!?
YOU.....

IORI HASHIMA.
IT WASN'T SO IMPORTANT THAT YOU NEED TO REPEAT YOURSELF.
LONG TIME NO SEE, YOU TWO.
OH YEAH, I THINK SHE SAID HE WAS COMING BACK TOO.
IZUMI-CHAN'S BIOLOGICAL OLDER BROTHER.
SINCE I'VE MOVED BACK TO TOKYO THIS MONTH, I JUST THOUGHT I'D SAY HI.
WHAT DO YOU WANT, IORI?
WHY'D YOU BOTHER COMING BACK? YOU COULD'VE STAYED AND HAD YOUR FILL OF NAGOYA CUISINE.
MUSTA BEEN TASTY, HUH?

THE THING THAT REALLY KILLED ME...

...WAS THAT THERE ARE NO MAJOR DOUJIN MARKETS IN NAGOYA LIKE THEY HAVE IN KANTO .....

!

SOUNDS LIKE YOU HAD MORE THAN YOUR FILL!

WELL, I TRIED PRETTY MUCH EVERYTHING THEY'RE KNOWN FOR, BUT IF I WAS TO SHARE DETAILS ON HOW IT WAS LACKING, IT WOULD BE TOO LONG TO FIT INTO A WORD BALLOON.

IT'S NOT ACTUALLY THAT GREAT.

OH, BUT IT WAS NICE TO EASILY GET AHOLD OF BOOKS AND GAMES THERE THAT WOULD SELL OUT IN A FLASH ON RELEASE DAY IN AKIBA.

DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE STILL .....

THREE YEARS IN A PLACE WHERE I COULDN'T PUT MY TRUE TALENTS TO USE WAS HELL.

...TO SUMMER COMIKET!

AND SO, I'M FINALLY MAKING MY LONG-OVERDUE, TRIUMPHANT RETURN .....

!!

YOU .....

YOU REALLY GOT YOUR FILL AND THEN SOME, HUH?

I RAKED IT IN RESELLING THEM.

YOU'RE PART OF A CIRCLE TOO!?

SURE AM.

I JUST CAN'T WAIT TO SEE ALL THE BUSINESS CARDS AND E-MAIL ADDRESS-ES...

...AND MERCH AND BOOKS I SCORE, AND HOW MUCH MONEY I'M GONNA MAKE.

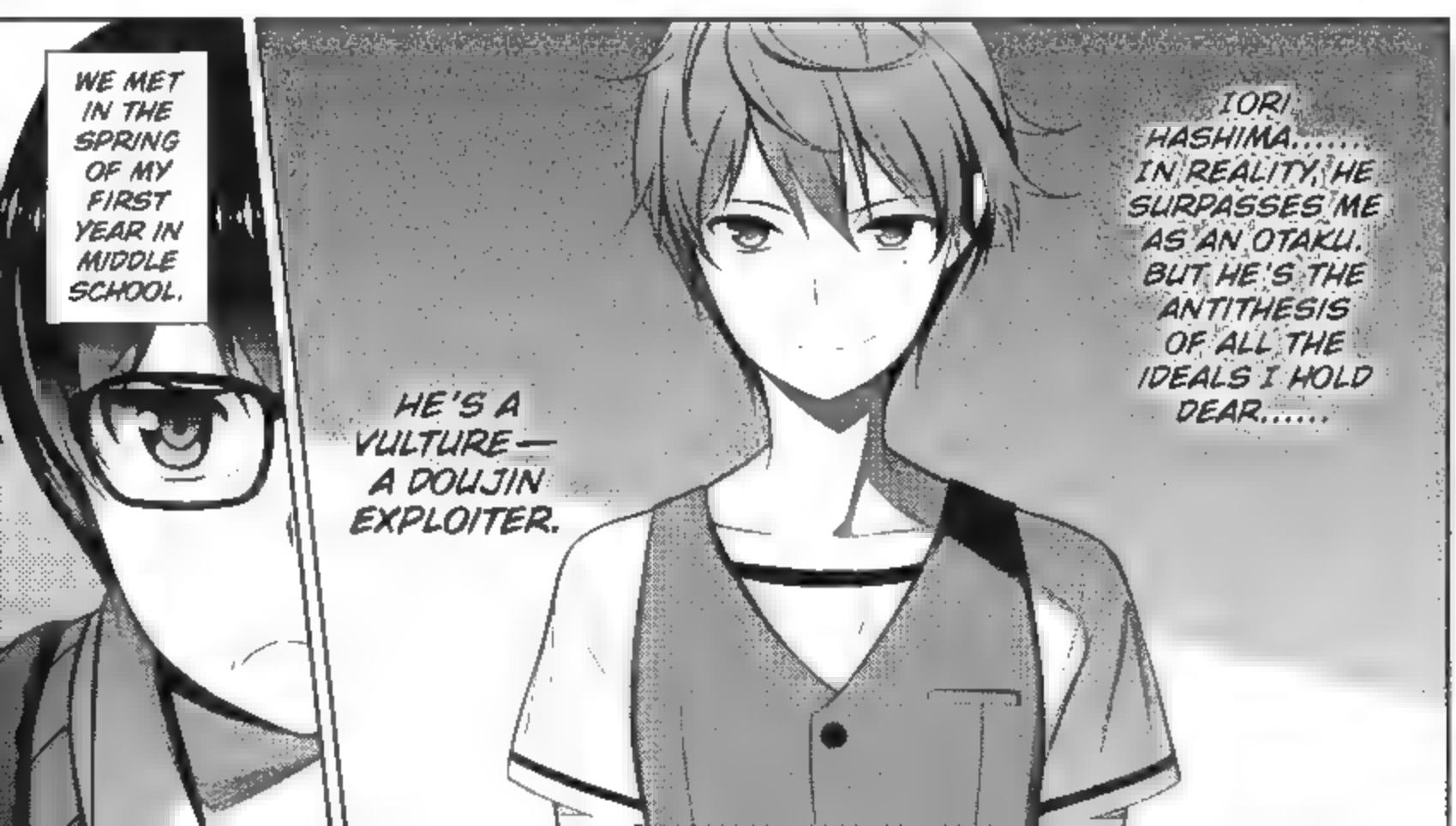
HEH...

IORI..... SO YOU ARE STILL UP TO NO GOOD .....!

GI (GRIT)

END

YOU'RE STILL UP TO YOUR OLD TRICKS.



HIS DEPTH OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE AMOUNT OF STUFF HE OWNED WAS INCREDIBLE. EVEN A GROWN-UP COULDN'T HAVE BEAT HIM.

AT THE TIME, IORI WAS ALREADY A HARD-CORE ELITE OTAKU.

WE SENSED THAT WE WERE KINDRED SPIRITS, AND WITHIN TEN OR SO MINUTES OF TALKING, WE BECAME FAST FRIENDS.

AND THEN, ABOUT A YEAR LATER, I STARTED KEEPING MY DISTANCE 'COS I'D RECOGNIZED HIS TRUE NATURE.

HE GOT CHUMMY WITH A LOT OF MAJOR DOUJINSHI CREATORS, OF COURSE, BUT HE ALSO BECAME FRIENDS WITH A NUMBER OF BIGWIGS IN ALL DIFFERENT POSITIONS ON THE PRO SIDE TOO.

WHAT'S MORE, HIS INTER-PERSONAL SKILLS WERE PRETTY SPECIAL. HE WOULD TALK TO ARTISTS HE'D NEVER MET BEFORE AND ENDEAR HIMSELF TO THEM.

IT REALLY IS TOO BAD. WITH MY NEGOTIATION SKILLS, CONTACTS, AND DIPLOMACY, AND YOUR IDEAS, PASSION, AND INVOLVE-MENT...

TOMOYA-KUN, I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE STILL SAYING SUCH NAIVE THINGS.

IMPROVING HIS OWN STANDING IS WHAT IORI IS REALLY ALL ABOUT.

IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT, JOIN THE COMIKET PLANNING COMMIT-TEE.

...I THINK WE COULD TAKE OVER THE WORLD OF DOUJIN SOMEDAY.

.....
GET A LOAD OF THAT AMAZING INFO-GATHERING PROWESS .....!
HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?

!
YOU'VE GOT A PRACTI-CALLY PRO ARTIST AND WRITER ON BOARD. I CALL THAT CHEATING.
I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOUR DOUJIN GAME CIRCLE, BY THE WAY.....

YES.
I WAS THE ONE WHO MADE THAT OFFER TO YOUR PSEUD-ONYM, KASHI-WAGI-SENSEI.

ERIRI ?
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE ...
HASHI-MA.....

ROUGE EN ROUGE!
WHA —!?
..."ROUGE EN ROUGE" MADE HER AN OFFER TOO.
...SHE MIGHT BE YOUR CIRCLE'S ARTIST, BUT MY CIRCLE...
SEE, TOMOYA-KUN...

CHAPTER
13

It's nice out today. Wanna go do something fun?

Hey there, Megumi!

EEP!

SO IZUMI-CHAN LIKES THESE KINDS OF GAMES, HUH?

THIS *LITRHAP* GAME IS KIND OF EMBAR-RASSING!

'SUP, MEGUMI!?

AND WHY'RE YOU PLAYING UNDER YOUR OWN NAME ANYWAY!?

WELL, I COULDN'T HELP IT. SHE MADE IT SOUND SO FUN, JUST LIKE YOU DO, AKI-KUN.

WHAT? GIVING UP AL-READY?

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SAID YOU WANTED TO TRY IT!

ZEE

ZEE (WHEEZE)

I'M SORRY, KATOU-SAN.

I WORKED HARD ALL NIGHT, BUT I'M STILL BEHIND SCHEDULE .....

OH, I'M NOT BOTH-ERED.

OHHH! NO, NO! MY HANDS ARE BUSY, SEE!?

OH, HANG ON. THIS ISN'T THE TIME TO TALK GAMES, IS IT, AKI-KUN?

I PLAYED THROUGH THE GAL GAME LIKE I WAS MAKING FRIENDS, BUT WITH THIS, IT'S HARD TO SHAKE THE AWARENESS OF THEM BEING THE OPPOSITE SEX.

SO YOU'RE SAYING YOU DON'T RECOGNIZE ME AS A MEMBER OF THE OPPOSITE SEX?

HUH!?

Megumi... listen.

There's something I have to tell you right now.

SA..... SAWA-MURA-SAN, WHAT WOULD YOU PICK?

ACCEPT? DECLINE?

WH-WH-WHAT DO I DO, AKI-KUN .....? WHAT DO I SAY BACK!?

DON'T ASK ME, "MEGUMI"!

If the answer is "okay," then flash me that amazing smile of yours.

And if it's "no," then please say you couldn't hear me over the sound of the fireworks.

BUT..... THIS IS SERIOUS, YOU KNOW? I THINK HE MEANS IT, DON'T YOU?

AGH!

SAWA-MURA-SAN?

HEY .....

SHE'S NOT ANGRY...

WHAT THE—? THIS IS TOTALLY UNNATURAL FOR ERIRI .....

WOW! THAT SOUNDS LIKE FUN!

EVERY YEAR, OUR FRIENDS GET TOGETHER AND HAVE A BLAST WATCHING THE SHOW!

OUR BALCONY'S LIKE HAVING BOX SEATS!

I RE-SPECT-FULLY DECLINE!

WELL..... AMBASSA-DORS AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTERS AND STUFF...

UH, ERIRI, WHO ARE THESE "FRIENDS"?

KACHI KACHI

KACHI

KACHI (CLICK)

SHAAAAAA (FWSSSH)

UM..... SO.....
WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO ABOUT THAT INVITE FROM ROUGE EN ROUGE?

WHAT?

.....
H—
HEY ...

THE CIRCLE ROUGE EN ROUGE.
ALMOST EVERYONE ATTENDING COMIKET KNOWS WHO THEY ARE.
.....I BET.
IT'S AN ATTRACTIVE OFFER.

I'D PROBABLY SELL DOUBLE WHAT I AM NOW, AND RUMOR HAS IT THEY EVEN ASSIGN YOU AN ASSISTANT.

WELL, I TOOK OVER FROM THE ORIGINAL LEADER, SO I'VE GOT IT PRETTY EASY AS THE SECOND HEAD.
YEAH, I'M IN CHARGE OF IT NOW.
FOR THE PAST TEN YEARS, THEY'VE NEVER ONCE LOST OUT ON THE SWEET SPOT RIGHT BY THE ENTRANCE.
THESE DAYS, THEY'RE A GIGANTIC ORGANIZATION THAT YOU MIGHT AS WELL CALL A BUSINESS ENTERPRISE.
I CAN'T BELIEVE IORI'S REPPING THE CIRCLE NOW.

SHE'S A POWERFUL, MEGA-BESTSELLING MANGA-KA WITH SEVERAL SERIES THAT HAVE BEEN MADE INTO ANIME AND WHOSE EVERY VOLUME ENDS UP A BIG HIT.

AND COUNTLESS TIMES, SHE'S OFFERED STORIES TO OTHER ARTISTS AND TURNED THEM INTO HITS TOO.

AKANE KOUSAKA, THE FOUNDER OF IORI'S CIRCLE.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, IF AKANE KOUSAKA LIKES YOU, YOUR SUCCESS IN THE PRO INDUSTRY'S PRACTICALLY A GIVEN.

KACHI (CLICK)

KACHI KACHI

WHEN I THINK ABOUT THAT..... WHAT COULD I..... EVER DO FOR ERIRI .....?

...AND ALL OF THOSE PEOPLE ARE ALUMS OF ROUGE EN ROUGE.

TO THIS DAY, THERE'RE A WHOLE BUNCH OF ARTISTS WHO GOT BIG THAT WAY AND HAVE HER TO THANK FOR THEIR SUCCESS...

AND DONNNE ~!

FOR AMPLE, WHAT VOULD OU SAY ARE YOUR DEAL PTIONS .....?

FOR YOU..... MAYBE THAT KIND OF...

HEY ..... WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO NEXT, ERIRI?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "NEXT" .....?

HM?

.....
TOMO-YA.

HUH?
WHAT?

FASA (SWISH)

THAT DOES IT FOR MY SUMMER COMIKET PAGES ~!

NOW TO START ON THE KEY VISUALS RIGHT AWAY!

OH .....

...AND THAT'S NOT EVEN FOR MY OWN CIRCLE.

'COS I'VE GOT NOTHING ELSE LINED UP UNTIL WINTER COMIKET THIS YEAR...

HUH? WHY NOT?

...I'M NOT SIGNED UP FOR A SINGLE EVENT AFTER SUMMER COMIKET, OKAY?

I'M JUST GONNA PUT THIS OUT THERE, BUT...

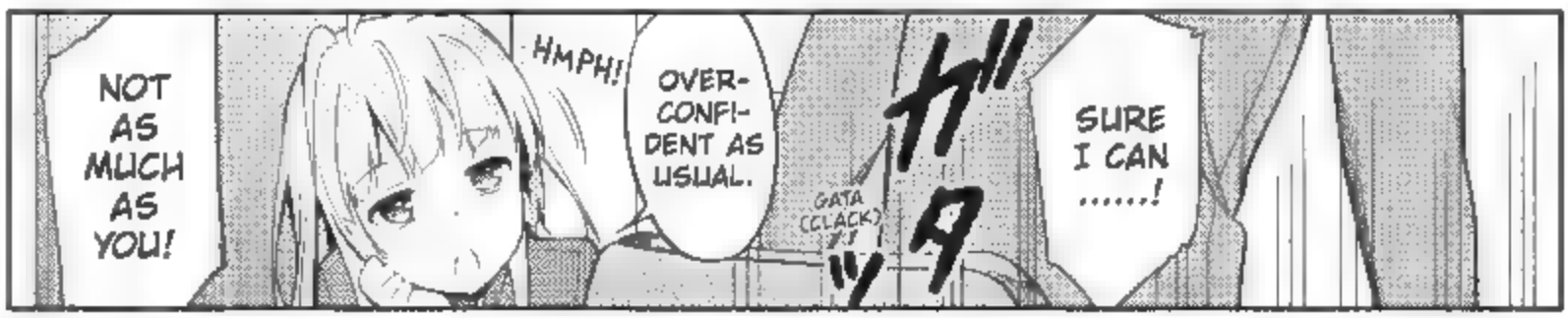
GOT THAT?

AND OF COURSE, IT'S NOT FOR ROUGE EN ROUGE EITHER!

CAN YOU MAKE THE MOST OF MY TALENTS, TOMOYA?

CAN YOU KEEP UP WITH ME?

OH...



HA-HA! HA-HA-HA-HA-HA!

YOU'RE AWFUL~! AND YOU USED TO BE HIS CLASS-MATE TOO~!

DO (BURST)

AH HA HA HA HA!

YEAH, I TOTALLY WOULDN'T PUT IT PAST HIM!

ERIRI WAS ODDLY HYPED UP.....

C'MON! NOW LIE DOWN ON THE BED!

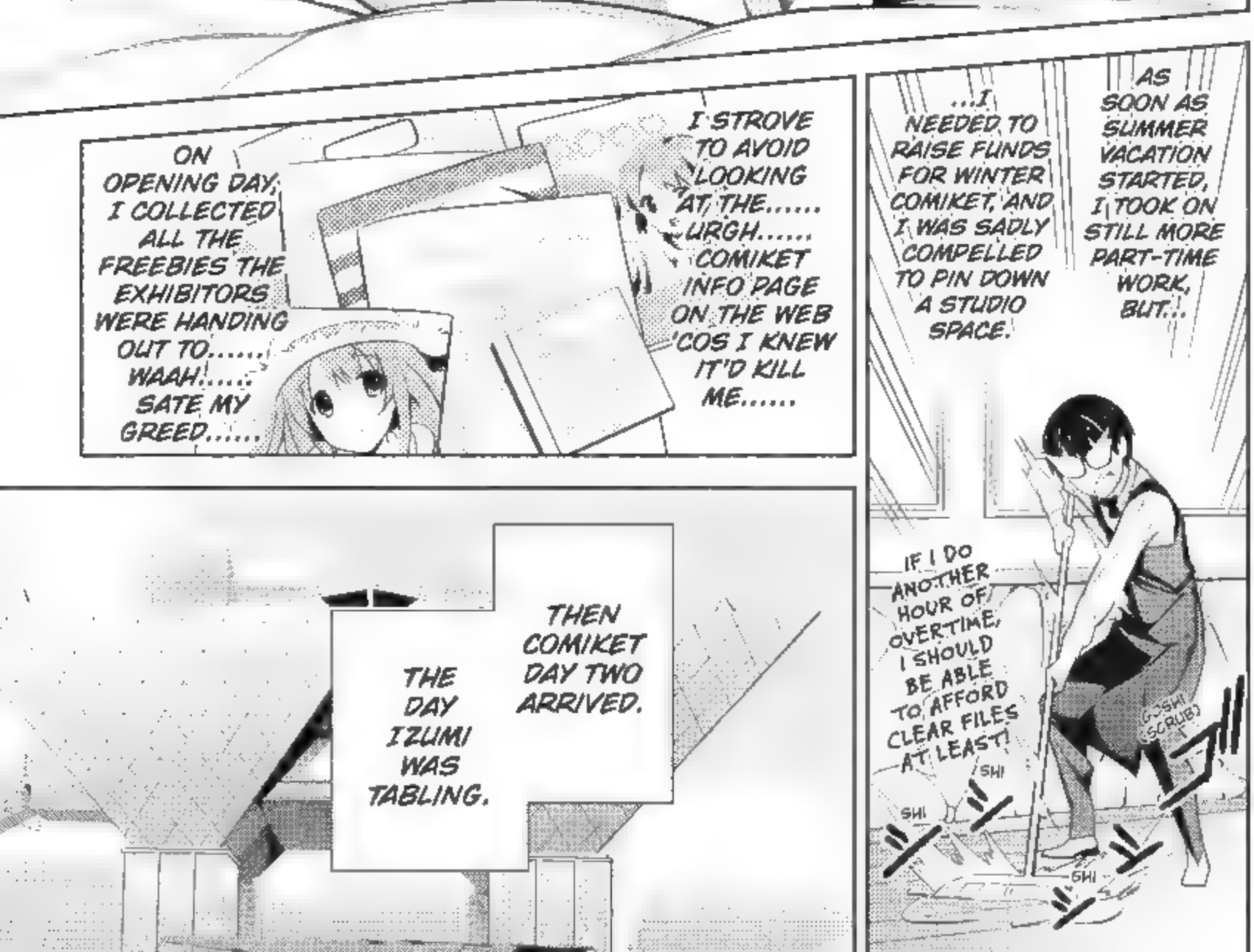
I'M GETTING INTO THIS!

YOU'RE TOO INTO IT!

AWW, NOOO! MORE LIKE THIS! SPREAD YOUR LEGS AND GIVE ME A POSTCOITAL LOOK!

GEEZ, CALM DOWN, ERIRI!

AKI-KUN, HELP MEEE!



SENPAI, YOU CAME!

WELL, YOU GAVE ME A TICKET, SO THAT MAKES ME A MEMBER OF YOUR CIRCLE.

UMM, THAT'S GOING TO GET SOME AWKWARD REACTIONS OUT OF PEOPLE, SO PLEASE CALL ME BY MY NAME.

OH, UMM...

AND YOUR GIRLFRIEND TOO! THANK YOU FOR COMING!

HRRN, SO THAT'S YOUR TAKE...

Y-YES, MEGUMI-SAN!

I'M MEGU-MI.

COULD YOU CALL ME THAT?

AND NOW THIS...

.....UMM...

Y-YES! UNDER-STOOD, KAMO-SAN!

"KAMO MEGUMI"... "KAMOME-GUMI"... THE KAMOME GROUP...!

OH, NO! I'LL BE FINE!

IF I CAN HELP IN ANY WAY, PLEASE LET ME KNOW.

WELL, WANNA START SETTING UP!?

JUST TELL ME WHAT YOU NEED DONE!

ALL SET UP!

THERE!

THIRTY SECONDS!

TEKIPAKI (BRISK)

SA (SHP)

SA

SA

¥500

Fancy

SINCE *LITRHAP* 3'S RELEASE, I'VE MANAGED TO SELL FIFTY COPIES OF MY WORK.

OHH! I'M FINE BY MYSELF.

HOW ABOUT A SALES-PERSON, THEN?

WELL, THAT'S PRETTY TYPICAL. I KNOW OVER 90 PERCENT OF THE CIRCLES HERE FEEL THE SAME.

I..... SEE.

IT COSTS ALMOST THE SAME TO PRINT A HUNDRED AS IT DOES FIFTY, SO I WENT FOR IT.

BUT THIS TIME, I GOT CARRIED AWAY AND PRINTED A HUNDRED COPIES .....

BUT...

...THERE'S SOMETHING HERE THAT'S FAR MORE IMPORTANT THAN SALES.

HUH?

BUT WITH IORI'S..... THAT IS, IZUMI'S BROTHER'S CIRCLE...

...EVEN IF THEIR SALES ARE CRAP, THEY COULD STILL SELL A HUNDRED TIMES WHAT'S STACKED HERE.

CONSIDERING THAT.....

...ALL REALLY LOVE TO CHAT!

THE PEOPLE WHO DROP BY MY TABLE...

THE AREA AROUND MY TABLE TOTALLY TURNS INTO A TEA PARTY!

WHAT'S MORE, OTHER PEOPLE GET PULLED INTO THE CONVERSATION, AND MEMBERS OF THE CIRCLES WITH NEIGHBORING TABLES JOIN IN TOO.

I END UP TALKING TO EACH PERSON WHO COMES BY FOR AROUND THIRTY MINUTES!

LIT-RHAP HAS A LOT OF HARD-CORE FANS!

IT'S LOTS OF FUN, AND IT MAKES ME SO HAPPY!

OH..... GUESS SO.

OKAY!

HEY, IORI..... UNLIKE YOU, YOUR KID SISTER'S GROWING UP A STRAIGHT-FORWARD OTAKU!

OH, NO! THEY'RE NOT MY FANS— THEY'RE FANS OF LIT-RHAP!

OHHH! YOU'RE AMAZING, IZUMI-CHAN!

YOU'VE GOT SUCH GREAT FANS!

...YOU'RE HERE TOO, SENPAI .....

GUGU (SNIFF)

AND THIS TIME .....

HUUUH!?

I'M SO HAPPY!

WAAAAH!

I'M JUST A FRIEND'S LITTLE SISTER ...

...BUT YOU CAME TO MY TABLE TODAY!

SO, SENPAI... PLEASE STAY HERE WITH ME, OKAY?
PLEASE SPEND TODAY READING MY BOOK, AND TALKING TO ME, AND SMILING AT ME, AND WATCHING OVER ME!
YEAH, SURE. ...OKAY.
.....GEEZ, THE WATER-WORKS!

UH, UMM, BUT I'M HERE 'COS YOU...
RIGHT?
SHE GAVE ME THE TICKET!
HEY, DON'T DUMP THIS ON ME!

BUT YOU AND THE WORDS "BELOVED SENPAI" GO TO-GETHER LIKE OIL AND WATER, AKI-KUN.
ARE YOU LOOKIN' FOR A FIGHT? HUH!?

UM, SHE MISTOOK ME FOR YOUR GIRL-FRIEND BEFORE, RIGHT?
SO WHAT'S UP WITH THIS?
JUST THE USUAL FEELINGS OF AF-FECTION TOWARD A SENPAI, I'D SAY.

OOH..... UM, IT'S A VERY SIMPLE BOOK, ISN'T IT?

GAYA
わび
や
GAYA
わび
や
GAYA (BUZZ)
わび
や

ABOUT TEN MINUTES TILL DOORS, HUH .....

YOU CAN JUST APOLOGIZE FOR STUFF LIKE THAT WITH A LINE IN THE AFTERWORD.

AND I'M DOUBLY SORRY THAT IT TURNED INTO A BOOK OF PENCIL SKETCHES HALFWAY THROUGH .....

I SAY THAT, BUT .....

NO, IT'S PLEASANT.

I'M SORRY THE COVER'S ALL WHITE .....

I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO DRAW IT.

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IT'S SO COMPLICATED WITH ALL THESE LINES, I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHICH ONES I SHOULD BE LOOKING AT.....

SAVE HER FROM ME, THE SPITEFUL GOD .....!

HELP ME, MIKIYA!

THE BLACK LEVELS ARE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM THE EARLIER PAGES.

IT'S TRUE.....THE CHARACTERS, THE BACKGROUNDS, THEY'RE ALL A MESS OF PENCIL.

YOU CAN'T DO THAT .....!

THEN THE LEVEL OF COMPLETION DROPS ALL OF A SUDDE— ..... HUH?
PERA
PERA
PERA
UP TO THIS POINT, SHE REALLY DID HER BEST TO FINISH THE BACKGROUNDS AND EVERYTHING.
PERA (FLIP)

IZUMI-CHAN!
HUH!? REALLY?
THEN YOU'RE A LIT-RHAP-PER TOO!
YOU KNOW, I PLAYED THIS GAME RECENTLY MYSELF.
AT AKI-KUN'S HOUSE.

?
WHAT IS IT, TOMOYA-SENPAI .....?

IZUMI-CHAN.

THIS BOOK.

YOU DON'T MIND SELLING OUT OF IT, DO YOU?

CHAPTER
14

IZUMI-CHAN.

IS IT MORE IMPORTANT TO YOU TO TALK TO FELLOW FANS THAN TO SELL YOUR BOOK?

YOU DON'T WANT TO BE POPU-LAR?

NO DOUJIN ARTIST OUT THERE WOULD SAY THEY DON'T CARE IF THEY DON'T SELL! GOSH, SENPAI!

..... AH HA HA! NOOO WAY!

LIKE I SAID BEFORE, HAVING FUN IS THE BEST PART.

SO..... YOU'RE COOL WITH SELLING A LOT?

HUH?

SORRY! I'VE GOT TO TAKE OFF FOR A BIT!

PROMISE I'LL BE BACK BEFORE CLOSING TIME!

ALL RIGHT .....

BUT I GUESS THAT'S ALSO PARTLY AN EXCUSE FOR NOT SELLING MUCH, SO.....

AH HA HA!

SORRY-YYYY!

NO RUN-NING ~!

S-SENPAI!?

THREE HOURS LATER

YES.

YOU'RE RIGHT .....

NOT MANY PEOPLE COMING BY THE TABLE ANYMORE, HUH?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

AND HERE'S YOUR ¥500 CHANGE.

AREN'T YOU WOR-RIED?

BUT EXACTLY WHERE, I CAN'T SAY.

DUNNO? OUT, MOST LIKELY.

OH! ARE YOU KINDA MAD AT HIM?

NOT LIKE HE WORRIES ABOUT ME IN THE FIRST PLACE.

WHERE DO YOU THINK TOMOYA-SENPAI WENT?

..... UM... ... MEGUMI-SAN?

UH, THAT'S NOT IT.

I KNOW BECAUSE I HAVE NO FAITH IN HIM AT ALL.

WHY DO YOU HAVE SO MUCH FAITH IN HIM?

.....HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?

YOU'RE THE ONE HE'S GIVING HIS ALL FOR RIGHT NOW, IZUMI-CHAN.

WELL, IN ANY CASE, I THINK HE'LL BE BACK SOON.

I CAN'T GET THROUGH TO HIS CELL

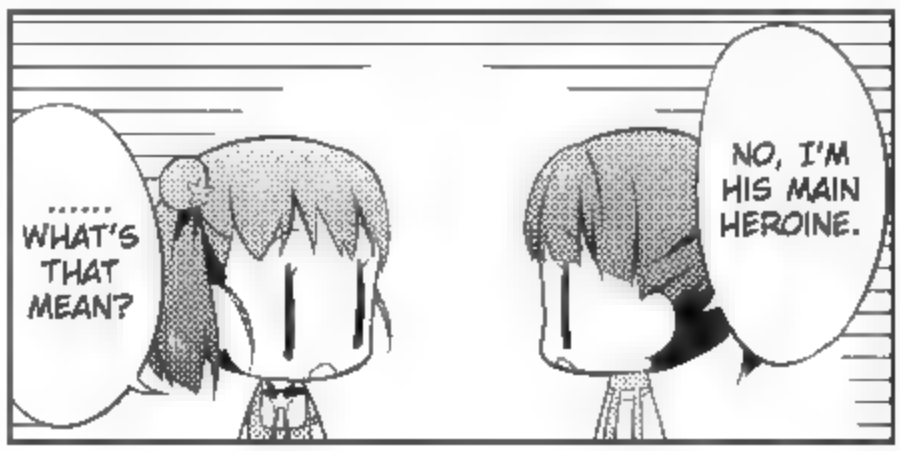
MEGUMI-SAN..... ARE YOU ACTUALLY TOMOYA-SENPAI'S GIRL-FRIEND?

UMM .....

SORRY I'M SO LATE!

ZA (STEP)

I REALLY WISH I KNEW.



WELCOME BACK.
SAY, KATOU, ARE YOU GOOD AT ARTS AND CRAFTS?
THANKS!

SORRY TO ASK, BUT YOU MIND HELPING ME OUT, THEN?
UH, JUST OKAY.

HFF!
HFF!
S-SENPAI .....!?

SELLING BOOKS, OF COURSE!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
ER, WHAT EXACTLY IS THIS .....?
ISN'T IT OBVIOUS?

PLEASE STEP RIIIGHT UP AND HAVE A LOOK!

ZAWA (MURMUR)

IT'S A LITRHAP 3 BOOK!

ZAWA

ZAWA

MEGUMI-SAN .....?

RIGHT!?

YES. THE PAGES IN THIS PART ARE THE MOST AMAZING OF THEM ALL.

IF PEOPLE READ THIS MUCH OF THE FABULOUS LAST HALF, THEY CAN'T WALK AWAY EMPTY-HANDED!

IN FACT, THE PERSON WHO BOUGHT ONE JUST NOW WAS SIMPLY WALKING PAST, SAW THIS SIGN, AND THEN STOPPED.

SIGN: HO-04A • FANCY WAVE

YES!

IZUMI-CHAN, HAS THE POWER TO SELL REGARD-LESS OF GENRE.

SENPAI... WHY A LIMIT .....?

TAKE A LOOK.

AWW, SHOULDA KNOWN! OKAY, TWO THEN.

さっ

SAGA (SWISH)

HUH .....? FOUR COPIES? YOU WANT THAT MANY?

SORRY, TWO'S THE LIMIT!

HUH !?

ヤカ!! GAYA

!

ヤカ!! GAYA

GAYA (BUZZ) ヤカ!!

GAYA ヤカ!!

ONE, PLEASE!

C-CER-TAINLY!

DON'T CROWD THE AISLE! TWO LINES, PLEASE!

I'LL TAKE TWO!

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

I'M REALLY SORRY, BUT WE'RE ALL SOLD OUT!
THANK YOU...
...SO, SO...
...SO VERY MUCH!

PUSHI (PSSHT)
UGH.
WARM .....
AS ARE ALL VENDING MACHINE DRINKS THIS TIME OF YEAR...

HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE I FELT THIS THRILLED AFTER READING A DOUJINSHI .....?
AND NOT JUST 'COS OF SUMMER COMIKET.
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YOU SHOULD'VE MINDED YOUR OWN BUSINESS.

..... WHEW.
TODAY WAS SO INTENSE .....

ANOTHER TWO OR THREE YEARS, AT LEAST.
I'D HOPED TO LEAVE IZUMI TO HER CAREFREE WAYS FOR A WHILE LONGER.

IORI..... SO YOU'RE HERE TOO.

.....!
THAT'S WHY I WAS TRYING TO GET SOMEONE TO HOLD HER SPOT.
WERE YOU GONNA WAIT FOR THE RIGHT TIME AND HAVE HER MAKE A DAZZLING DEBUT WITH ROUGE EN ROUGE?
WELL, YEAH. SHE'S STILL IN MIDDLE SCHOOL.

I'M NOT TREATING HER LIGHTLY.
OF COURSE, BEING IN ROUGE EN ROUGE IS A GUARANTEED SHORTCUT TO BECOMING A POPULAR CREATOR.
"HOLD HER SPOT" .....? YOU MEAN—
SO THAT WOULD BE ERIRI'S POSITION .....?

I DO KNOW, BUT..... I DON'T WANT TO IMAGINE WHAT SHE'D THINK IF SHE HEARD THAT.
WELL .....
AT SUCH A YOUNG AGE TOO. YOU KNOW THAT BETTER THAN ANYONE, DON'T YOU?
ERI KASHIWAGI IS FULLY DEVELOPED.

?
HUH?
TIME FOR OUR SHOW-DOWN AT LAST, HM, AKI-KUN?
ANYWAY, TOMOR-ROW'S DAY THREE.

NO WAY. WE'LL HAVE FAR MORE PROD-UCT.
WELL, ERIRI'S GONNA BEAT YOU.

ERIRI SAID HER TABLE IS RIGHT NEXT TO IORI'S TOMOR-ROW.
...OH, YEAH.
28
27

NOT IN SALES. WE'RE COMPETING WITH CONTENT.

WE WON'T HAVE TO, WILL WE?
SO HOW DO WE JUDGE THE WINNER?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
...WE'LL NEVER BACK DOWN.
NO MATTER THE DIFFERENCE IN SALES...

THAT'S RIGHT. EVEN IF YOU DON'T SELL, YOU CAN HAVE FUN. YOU CAN BE HAPPY.

I SPENT THE DAY WITH SOMEONE WHO REMINDED ME OF THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING...

...AN UNBREAKABLE SPIRIT AND BOTTOMLESS AMBITION.

SO I KNOW I CAN'T BE BEAT.

NO DICE! YOU'RE UNDER-AGE!

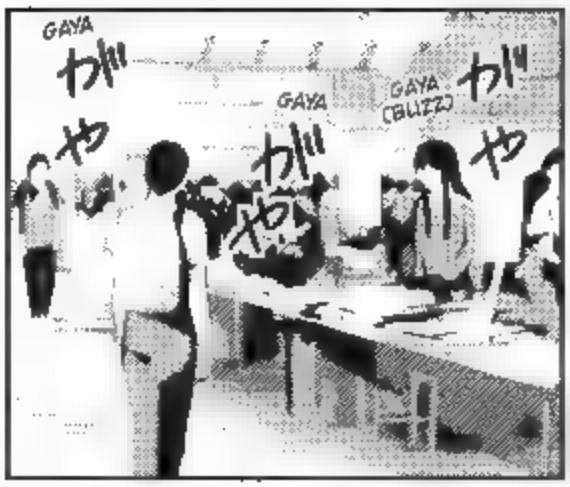
DON'T YOU "HEH" ME!!

AND I WON'T TRADE FOR IT EITHER. YOU GOTTA LET ME BUY IT FOR REAL!

HEH!

I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE IT!

I'LL DEFINITELY HAVE TO PICK UP A COPY FOR MY-SELF!



AWWW, THERE, THERE.

S-SENPAI .....

LET'S CALM DOWN NOW, IZUMI-CHAN.

TOMOYA-SENPAI!!!!! ~!

COSPLAY☆
YOU CAN SKIP THE ONE-LINERS, THANKS .....
THERE'RE PEOPLE HERE BOLDLY WALKING AROUND, DRESSED IN ALL KINDS OF CRAZY STUFF.
YOU SURE?

DAY TWO'S ALMOST OVER, YOU KNOW. YOU CAN'T GO OUTSIDE WITH THAT LOOK ON YOUR FACE, CAN YOU?
BUT! BUT! I NEVER IMAGINED THIS COULD HA— WAAAAH ~!

IN ALL THE TIME I'VE BEEN DOING DOUJIN, I'VE NEVER...
...BEEN THIS HAPPY .....!

TOMOYA .....?

IZUMI-CHAN .....

ERIRI?

NO, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE .....?
?
?
OH? SAWA-MURA-SAN.

GATA (CLACK)
WOW! THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR COMING!
ARE YOU SAWA-MURA-SENPAI?
... I'M ... HELPING OUT IZUMI-CHAN HERE WITH HER CIRCLE.

I-I..... JUST WANTED TO CHECK OUT THE SETUP TODAY.

IZUMI...

...HA-SHIMA-SAN.

THAT'S EXACTLY WHY I'D LIKE YOU TO HAVE IT!

NO, NO, IT'S TOTALLY FINE..... YOU SOLD OUT, DIDN'T YOU?

THE FIRST .....

DOKUN (BADUM)

THIS IS THE FIRST BOOK I'VE EVER SOLD OUT OF IN MY LIFE.....

IT'S A BOOK TO REMEMBER.

110 PACHI 千

PACHI 110 千

PACHI 110 千

PACHI (CLAP) 110 千

Thank you very much.

Comic☆ Market Day Two is now over.

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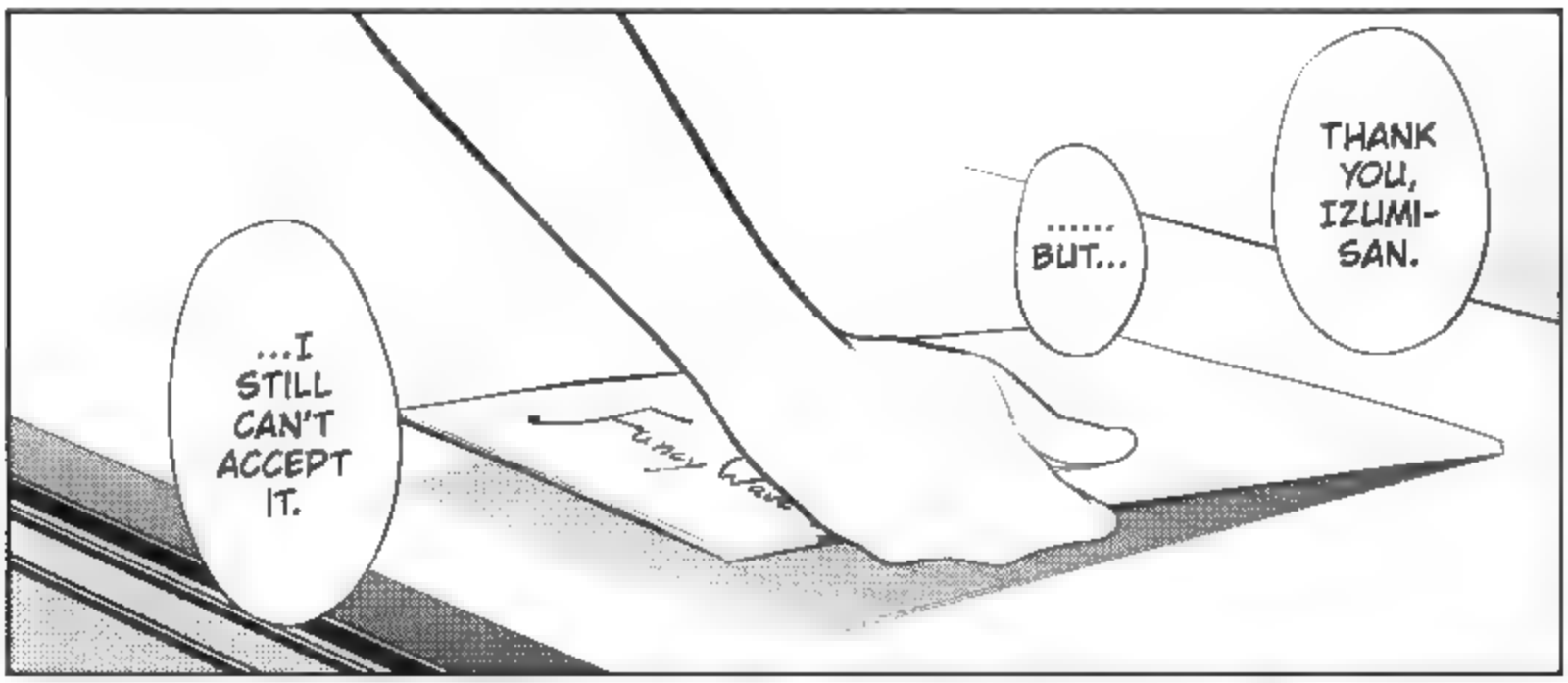

THANK YOU, IZUMI-SAN.
..... BUT...
...I STILL CAN'T ACCEPT IT.

I'M SORRY ..... I'M REALLY SORRY.
ERIRI ?

HUH? WHY .....?

SORRY, KATOU! I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!

I HAVE TO GO CHECK OUT THE SETUP.....
LATER.
ERIRI, HEY!
DA (DASH)

HEY! HOLD ON!

ERIRI!

C'MON, ERIRI! PLEASE WAIT!

GA (GRAB)

PACHI

PACHI

PACHI

PACHI (CLAP)

PACHI

HUH?

PACHI
PACHI
PACHI (CLAP)
PACHI
PACHI
YOU'RE THE WORST, TOMOYA.....
END

GOSHI (RUB)
WHAT'S WRO—?
ERIRI.

CHAPTER
15

.....I CAN'T.
COME BACK WITH ME AND APOLOGIZE TO IZUMI-CHAN, ALL RIGHT?
.....
LET'S GO BACK, OKAY?
IZUMI-CHAN POURED HER HEART INTO IT—
BUT IT'S A GOOD BOOK, ISN'T IT?
I DON'T NEED THAT BOOK..... I DON'T WANT TO READ IT.....
WHY NOT?
I KNOW THAT!

SO WHY DID YOU ACT THE WAY YOU DID .....?
I KNOW HOW GREAT IT IS.
HOW COULD I NOT .....?
I CAN TELL HOW MUCH WENT INTO THAT BOOK.
SO I GAVE IT BACK. AND THEN I RAN AWAY.
IF I DIDN'T GIVE IT BACK..... I THINK I WOULD'VE RIPPED IT UP AND THROWN IT AWAY.
SHE'S SCARED .....?

.....
OR ABOUT BEING HEAD-HUNTED ?
WERE YOU ANX-IOUS? ABOUT TOMOR-ROW'S SHOW-DOWN AND STUFF?

.....
IS IT MY FAULT?

THAT'S NOT IT.
JARI (CRUNCH)
BUT IZUMI-CHAN'S CIRCLE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH IORI'S .....
IF IT DID, THAT WAS CARE-LESS OF ME. I'M SORRY.
DID IT LOOK TO YOU LIKE I'M ON IORI'S SIDE?

EGOISTIC LILY ISN'T THAT PUNY A CIRCLE.
I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT TOMORROW.

IT'S 'COS I'VE..... NEVER SERIOUSLY CREATED ANYTHING MYSELF BEFORE.

I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT GOES ON IN THE MINDS OF CREATORS LIKE YOU!

WHAT'S SO AWFUL ABOUT THAT BOOK?

SO, UM..... WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

NOW SHE'S..... ANNOYED .....?

I JUST DON'T GET WHAT'S GOING THROUGH YOUR HEAD, ERIRI.....

IT IS .....

...IT'S AWESOME. ESPECIALLY THE LAST HALF.

WELL..... I'M JUST REPEATING MYSELF AGAIN, BUT...

.....WHAT DID YOU FEEL WHEN YOU READ THAT BOOK?

IT'S LIKE SHE JUST DREW WHAT SHE WANTED TO DRAW, NO MORE, NO LESS.

THAT'S WHAT SHE SAID TOO.

IT'S JUST PENCILS, BUT THE DEEPER YOU GET INTO THE SECOND HALF, THE MORE PACKED IT GETS.

IT GETS MORE AND MORE DYNAMIC AS IT GOES ALONG.

THE FIRST THING THAT DRAWS PEOPLE'S EYES IS THE COVER.

BUT WITH A BOOK, YOU NEED TO CONSIDER THE ENTIRE PACKAGE.

WE SOMEHOW PULLED IT OFF TODAY, BUT I REALLY DOUBT IT'D BE LIKE THIS EVERY TIME.

YEAH.

BUT WITH SOMETHING LIKE THAT, NO MATTER HOW AMAZING IT IS, IT WON'T SELL.

SHE NEEDS SOMEONE TO MAKE HER UNDER-STAND THOSE THINGS! BUT THAT JERK, IORI.....GAH! HE PISSES ME OFF!

...SHE'D LEAVE ME IN THE DUST JUST LIKE THAT.....

IF THAT GIRL TEAMED UP WITH SOMEONE GOOD .....

YEAH.

HANG ON A SEC.

WHAT'S THE POINT OF COMPARING?

YOU AND IZUMI-CHAN ARE IN TOTALLY DIFFERENT GENRES AT TOTALLY DIFFERENT LEVELS—

I'M SO AFRAID OF HAVING EVERYTHING TAKEN FROM ME!

UH, HOW COULD ANYTHING BE TAKEN FROM YOU? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

CALM DOWN. WHY WORRY ABOUT SOMETHING SO FAR IN THE FUTURE?

ALL THAT'S CERTAIN IS THAT YOUR SKILL IS LEVELS ABOVE IZUMI-CHAN'S RIGHT NOW. WHAT ELSE IS THERE?

WHAT'S SCARY IS SCARY!

THEN LET ME ASK YOU THIS.

AM I MORE AMAZING THAN SHE IS?

HUH ...?

C'MON! ANSWER ME!

DO YOU FEEL A THRILL WHEN YOU LOOK AT MY ART?

IS MY BOOK MORE AWE-SOME THAN HER BOOK?

DO YOU GET CHILLS DOWN YOUR SPINE?

DO YOU FEEL DRIVEN TO SELL THEM YOURSELF?

WELL, I SAID THERE'S NO POINT COMPAR-ING.....

YOU'LL STILL SELL EVEN WITHOUT M—

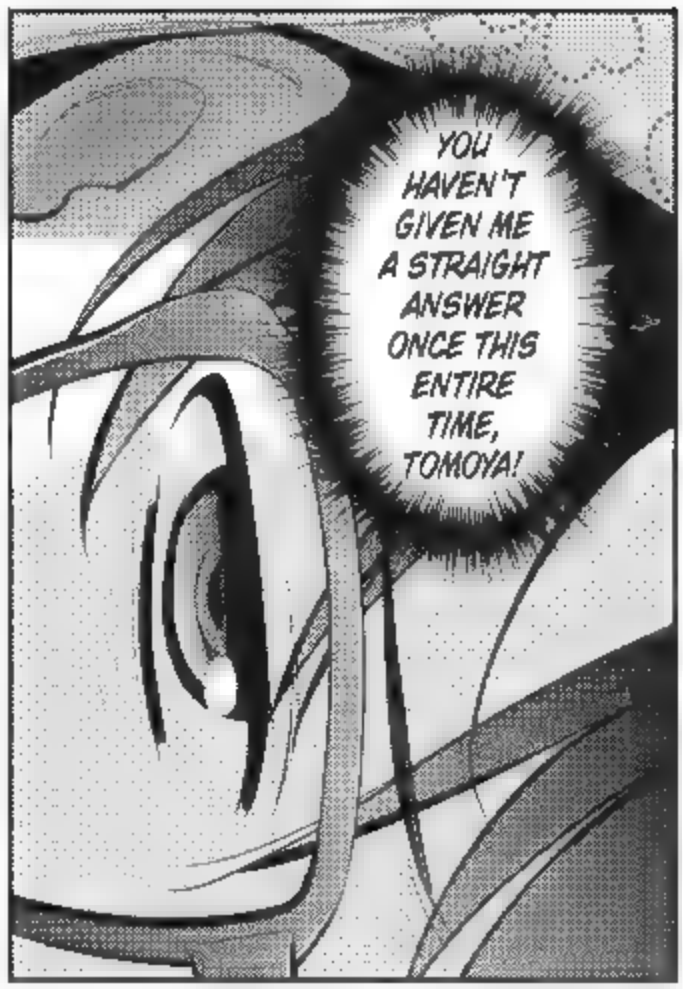
THAT'S NO ANSWER AT ALL!

YOU HAVEN'T GIVEN ME A STRAIGHT ANSWER ONCE THIS ENTIRE TIME, TOMOYA!

I COULDN'T LIE ABOUT A WORK LIKE THIS.....

THIS BOOK GOT TO ME MORE THAN ANY OTHER DOUJINSHI IN THE PAST YEAR.

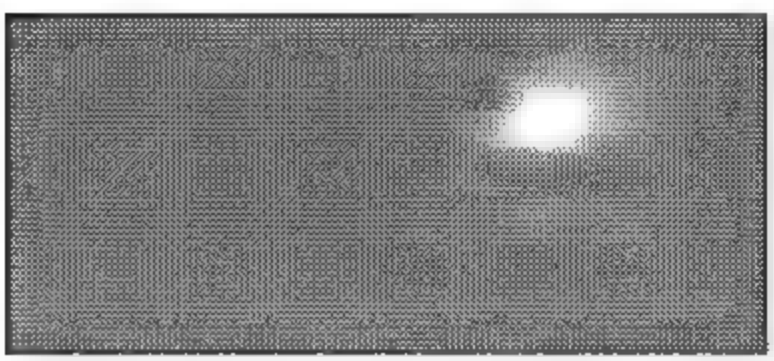
BUT..... HOW COULD I?



GWAAAAAH!!

UTAHA-SENPAI!?

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN HERE!?



THAT'S EVERYTHING THAT'S GONE DOWN WITH ME AND ERIRI UP TO TODAY.

—AND THERE YOU HAVE IT.

ENOUGH ALREADY!

SAWAMURA-SAN'S WEEPY FACE .....

I'M SAD. TO THINK I MISSED SUCH A JUICY EVENT!

IT WOULD'VE BEEN AN IMAGE TO TREASURE FOREVER IN MY SAVED PHOTOS FOLDER!

PLEASE STOP WITH THE WORST CHARACTER AWARDS!

SO YOU THINK THE BLAME RESTS ENTIRELY AT THE FEET OF SAWAMURA-SAN, THEN? DO YOU THINK SHE IS QUALIFIED TO BE ONE OF THE BIG, THREE WORST GAL GAME HEROINES?

I DON'T THINK YOU'RE IN THE POSITION TO GO THAT FAR...

I SEE. YOU REALLY ARE WORTHLESS, RINRI-KUN.

YOU COULD SHOOT TO BECOME ONE OF THE TOP THREE WORST GAL GAME HEROES EVER.

...WE'RE GONNA BE MAKING SOMETHING TOGETHER.

AFTER ALL...

IT'S OKAY IF I SPILL THE BEANS TO THESE TWO.

ABOUT THE POACHING.

ABOUT IORI.

I'VE LET IT ALL OUT, EVERYTHING ABOUT THE BAD BLOOD BETWEEN ERIRI AND ME.

ABOUT THE RIVALRY.

I DON'T KNOW IF SHE'S TOO FARSIGHTED OR IF SHE CAN'T TELL SHE AND IZUMI-CHAN ARE APPLES AND ORANGES.

YEAH .....

WELL, THIS HAS ALL TURNED INTO A REAL MESS.

OF COURSE, ERIRI...

...IS A MEMBER OF THE CIRCLE TOO.

.....

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

IT REALLY MAKES IT COMPLICATED WHEN THE PERSON INVOLVED ACTS LIKE AN OUTSIDER, YOU KNOW.

HAAAAAAAAH (SIGH)

はあああああ

BOTH HER PRIDE AS A CREATOR AND HER POSITION AS YOUR CHILDHOOD FRIEND.

.....

TO SAWAMURA-SAN, IT MUST FEEL LIKE SHE'S GOING TO BE ROBBED OF EVERYTHING.

OF COURSE SHE'S AFRAID.

DOESN'T THAT GO WITHOUT SAYING!?
SO WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO, RINRI-KUN?
DO YOU WANT TO PATCH THINGS UP WITH SAWA-MURA-SAN?

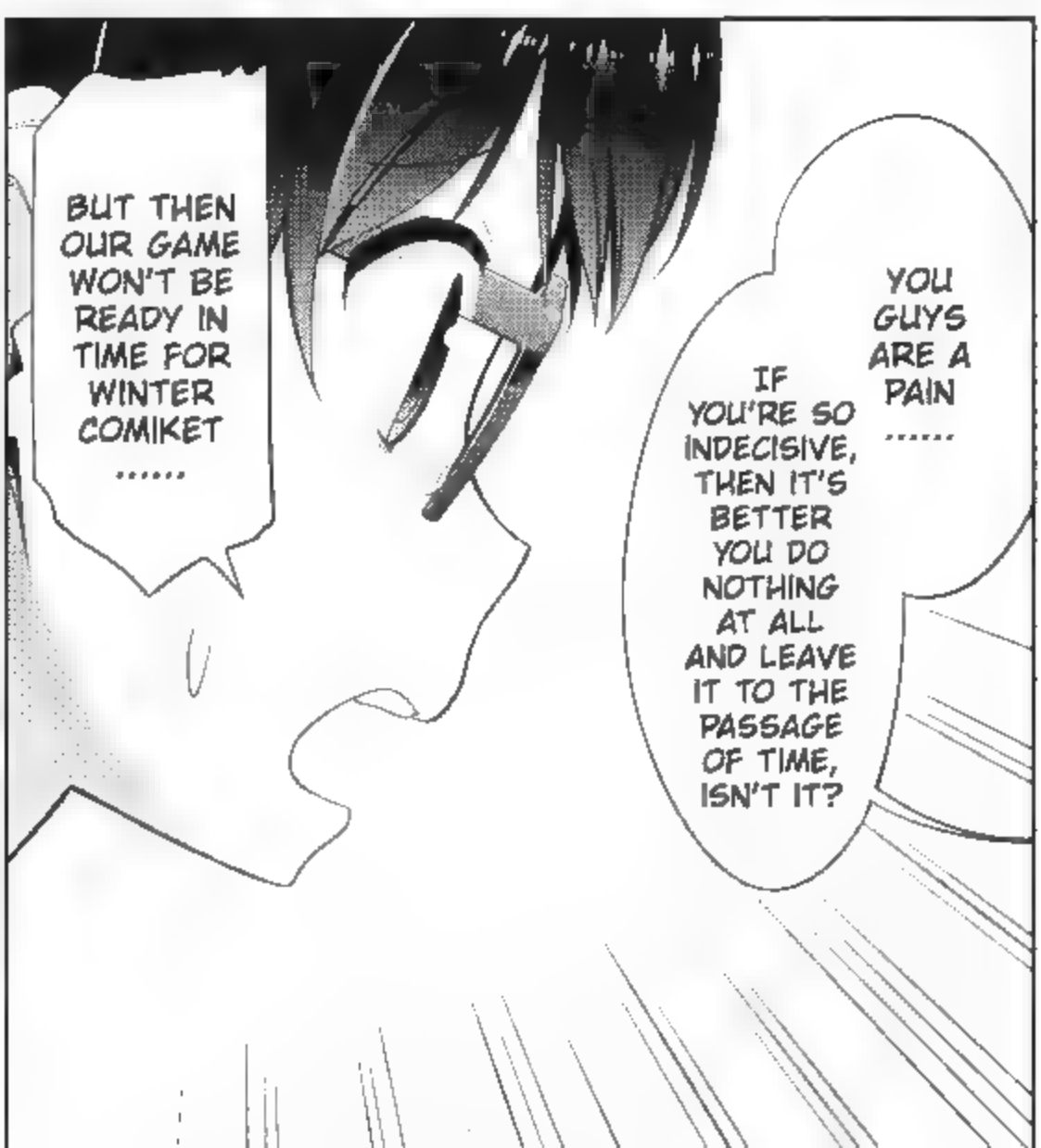
SORRY, BUT YOU'RE GETTING OFF TRACK HERE...
PLUS, IZUMI-SAN IS SO FOND OF YOU, RINRI-KUN. AND EVEN THOUGH SHE ONLY APPEARED PARTWAY INTO THE STORY, SHE HAS AWESOME STATS RIGHT OFF THE BAT. EVEN IF YOUR STRATEGY TO GET YOUR TOP GIRL FAILS, SHE'D DEFINITELY BE THE SAVIOR HEROINE WHO SHOWS UP AND CONFESSES HER LOVE. SHE'S THAT TYPE..... THAT KID MAKES ME SICK.

THIS ISN'T *METRO-NOME IN LOVE!*
DON'T TELL ME YOU WANT TO HAVE A DRAMATIC CHANGE OF MAIN HEROINES MID-STORY?
DO YOU ADORE HER? DO YOU LOVE HER? DO YOU WANT TO HOLD HER FOREV-ER?
SO YOU WANT TO PROTECT HER?
YOU WANT TO EMBRACE HER?

IT WOULD BE A DRAG IF THIS ILL WILL JUST WENT ON.
SO YOU WANT TO CHEER HER UP?

BUT THAT..... WON'T WORK WITH HER.
IF YOU LEAVE IT AWHILE, MAYBE IT'LL BE LIKE NOTHING HAPPEN-ED?

?


BUT THEN OUR GAME WON'T BE READY IN TIME FOR WINTER COMIKET .....
IF YOU'RE SO INDECISIVE, THEN IT'S BETTER YOU DO NOTHING AT ALL AND LEAVE IT TO THE PASSAGE OF TIME, ISN'T IT?
YOU GUYS ARE A PAIN .....

SHE..... CAN HOLD A GRUDGE FOR SO LONG, YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE IT.

FOR EXAMPLE..... AFTER THE LAST TIME I SAW HER CRY, SEVEN YEARS AGO...

...WE ONLY EVER EXCHANGED A FEW WORDS FOR THREE WHOLE YEARS AFTER.

IT WAS FIVE YEARS BEFORE WE STARTED LENDING EACH OTHER STUFF AGAIN.

AND SEVEN YEARS BEFORE WE COULD TALK NORMALLY.

SO..... I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ...

SHE'S GOT A MEAN PERSONALITY, SHE'S TWO-FACED, BOTH OF THEM TERRIBLE— I KNOW THAT!

AND I STILL DON'T TRUST HER, BUT— BUT SHE'S A DEAR FRIEND AND HAS BEEN FOREVER.

...THIS TIME!

AND NOW I'M SO AFRAID THAT WE'LL BE RIPPED APART AGAIN LIKE WE WERE BACK THEN.....!

COULD I FORGIVE ERIRI FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART AGAIN?

COULD ERIRI TRUST ME FROM THE BOTTOM OF HER HEART AGAIN?

... SENPAI .....

I'M SO SCARED .....

PON (PAT)

HM.....

PON

WHEN YOU COUNT ON ME SOMETIMES LIKE THIS, I FEEL FOR YOU.....

EVEN IF YOU'RE BEING TERRIBLE.

I'M SORRY.

DO YOU WANT TO CHEER HER UP?

YES.

DO YOU WANT TO PATCH THINGS UP WITH SAWAMURA-SAN?

YES.

DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT HER?

YEAH, ALL OF US TOGETHER.

NOW LET ME ASK YOU AGAIN.

KI (GLINT)

YES..... THIS TIME, FOR SURE!

DO YOU WANT TO MAKE AMENDS WITH HER?

DWAH !?

FUU (BLOW)

SO WHAT SHOULD I DO?

WELL THEN, LET ME COME UP WITH A PLAN.

IDIOTIC .....? LIKE WHAT?

HMM..... IT SEEMS LIKE YOU'VE FALLEN OUT FOR SOME IDIOTIC REASON, SO MAYBE IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA IF YOU RECONCILED BY SOME IDIOTIC MEANS AS WELL.

MUNNNNS (STRETCH)

DASH'SH BECASH YOU KEEP UNNESHE-SHARILY PROBOK-ING HER.

THE FACT IS, I WANT TO PATCH THINGS UP WITH A CERTAIN SOMEONE TOO, BUT IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE THINK SHE'LL EVER FORGIVE ME.

YOU NEED TO WIN THE CHILDHOOD HEROINE STORY-LINE...

...RINRI-KUN!

WIN IT .....?

ほか
HOKA (STEAM)

ほか
HOKA

OKAY.

LET'S BEGIN TODAY'S CIRCLE ACTIVI-TIES.

BORROWED FROM TOMOYA

ほか
HOKA

UMM.
CAN I OFFER AN OPINION?
KATOU?

...MAYBE YOU COULD PLAY SOME VIDEO GAMES OR SOMETHING TO KILL TIME.
I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT SAY SOME-THING LIKE THAT.

WELL, YOU TOLD ME BEFORE TO BECOME A HEROINE, RIGHT, AKI-KUN?
OKAY.
YES.

HUH?
I-I SEE...

IN THAT CASE, DON'T YOU HAVE TO SHOW ME AN EXAMPLE FIRST?

ERR, IS THAT KIND OF SCENE HARD TO CREATE?
DID YOU SAY...
...HARD !?
THAT'S IT RIGHT THERE!
DUH!
THE KEY THING ABOUT SAWAMURA-SAN ISN'T THAT SHE'S A PRINCESS OR TSUNDERE OR AN ERO-DOUJIN ARTIST ...!
WHEN IT COMES DOWN TO IT... YES!
SHE'S A MAIDEN AT HEART!
SHE'S A TOTAL CHICK WHO'S WAITING FOR AN OTAKU PRINCE IN A WHITE ITASHA CAR TO COME AND TAKE HER AWAY!
AH! HA HA HA HA HA!
HOW WEIRD CAN YOU GET!?
THE ONE WHO'S BEING WEIRD RIGHT NOW IS YOU, UTAHA-SENPAI!
ROGER THAT!
YES, MA'AM!
COMMENCE OPERATION: WIN THE CHILDHOOD FRIEND!
IT'S WELLING UP...THE CREATIVE JUICES ARE SURGING UP INSIDE ME LIKE SLUDGE!

CHAPTER
16

Z
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HFFF...

TEE-HEE!

MMF...

WELL, YOU'RE FEELING STRANGE AFTER STAYING UP ALL NIGHT.

YOU MAY REGRET IT TILL YOU DIE LATER, BUT THAT'S NOT ON ME.

HUH? YOU THINK YESTERDAY WAS THE FIRST TIME?

GAH! CAN THE ONE-LINERS!

I WAS BEING EARNEST FOR ONCE.

BISHI (WHAP)

YOU'VE SEEN...

...A LOT OF UNCOOL SIDES TO ME SINCE YESTERDAY.

KATOU ...

...DO YOU THINK YOU CAN STICK WITH ME AS MY MAIN HEROINE, EVEN IF I MAKE SUCH A WORTHLESS PROTAGONIST?

AKI-KUN.

I WILL DO MY BEST TO OVERCOME MY SHORTCOMINGS, SO PLEASE DO NOT FORSAKE ME!

IT'S ONLY YOUR PUSHINESS THAT'S BEEN KEEPING US TOGETHER TO BEGIN WITH.

I THINK OUR TEAM WILL LIKELY FALL APART NATURALLY.

WELL, DO IT QUICK, THEN, WILL YOU?

MAKE SURE NO ONE QUITS THE CIRCLE.
!
OH!
SURE.

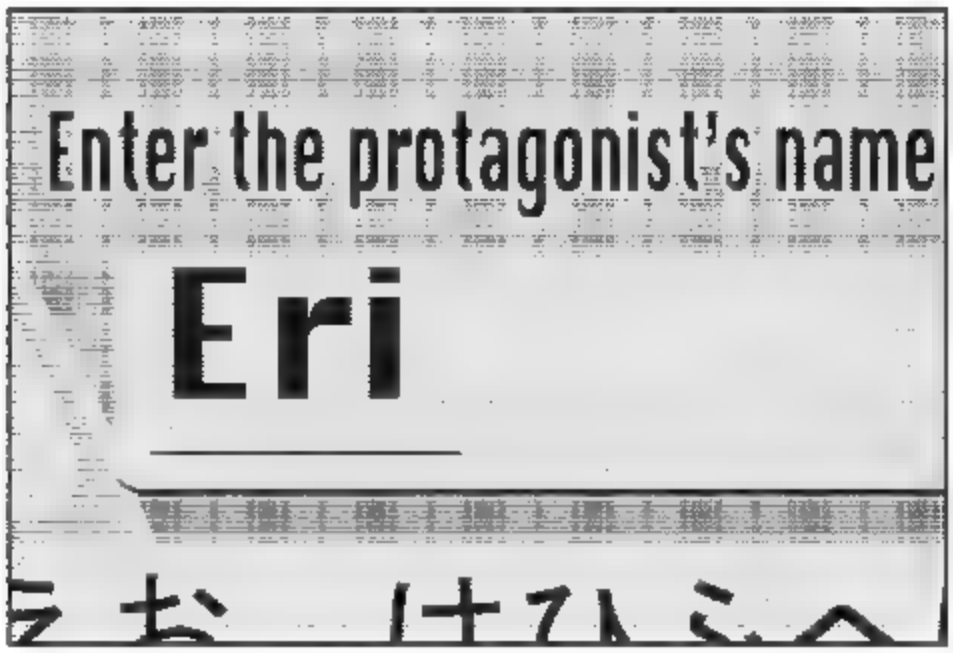
PATCH THINGS UP BETWEEN SAWA-MURA-SAN AND IZUMI-CHAN.
YUP...
PATCH THINGS UP WITH SAWA-MURA-SAN.
GOT IT.

KATOU... THOSE THINGS ARE...
WE'LL MAKE IT TOGETHER, AKI-KUN...
...THIS AWESOME GAME THAT YOU THOUGHT UP.

...JUST WHAT...
SEE YOU LATER!
I'M OFF, THEN!
...I'M HOPING FOR!

がや
がや
がや
がや
SAWA-
MURA
RESI-
DENCE

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, ERIRI!
DODON (KABOOM)
DON (BOOM)
THANK YOU, MOM AND DAD!
WOW! LITTLE LOVE RHAPSODY!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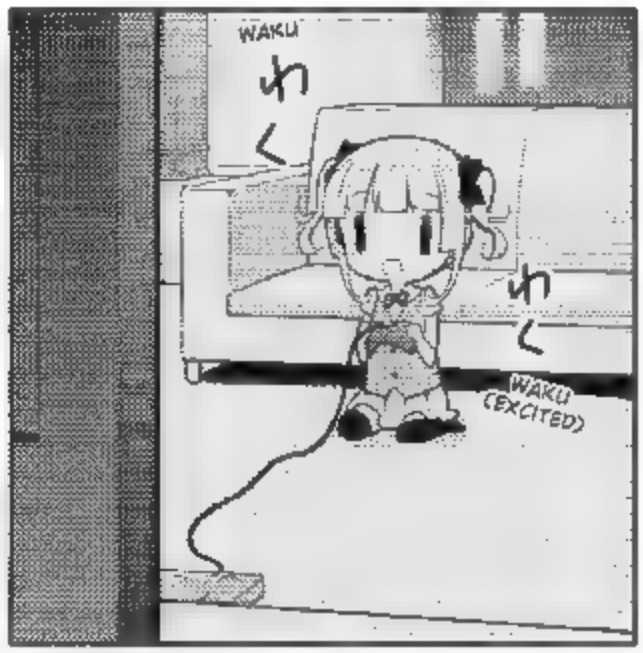
WAKU
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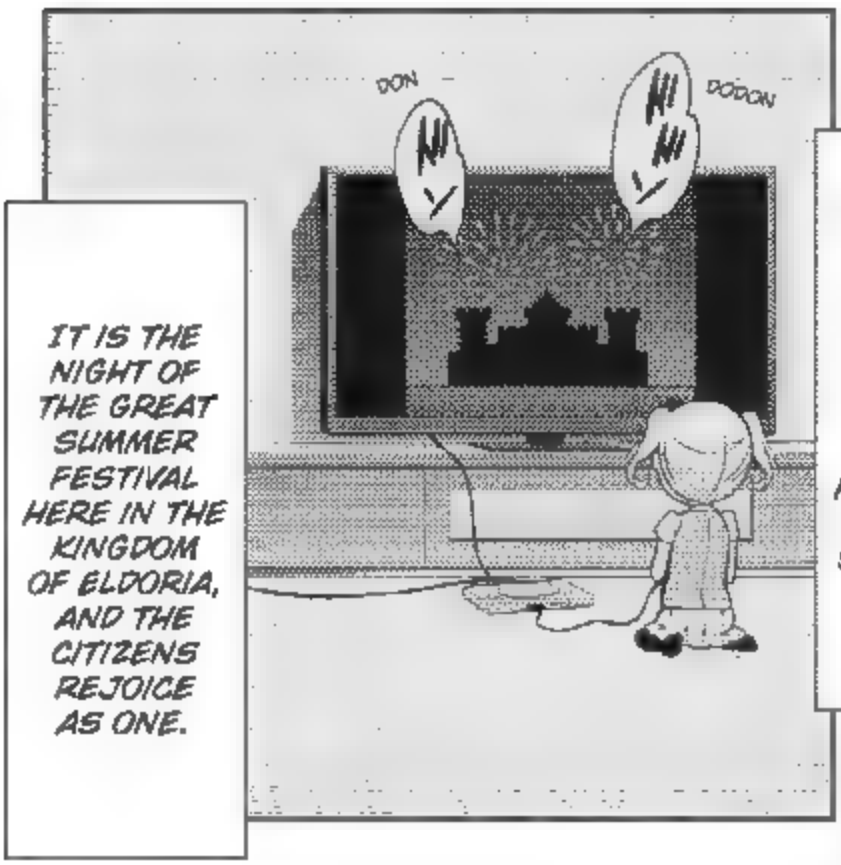
WAKU (EXCITED)


DON
DODON
IT IS THE NIGHT OF THE GREAT SUMMER FESTIVAL HERE IN THE KINGDOM OF ELDORIA, AND THE CITIZENS REJOICE AS ONE.

AN ESPECIALLY LARGE FIREWORK BLOSSOMS INTO A FLOWER IN THE SOUTHERN NIGHT SKY.
DON
DON

THE KNIGHT SERVIS WAS IN A CARRIAGE ON THE WAY TO TOWN TO ATTEND THE FESTIVAL. EN ROUTE, HE HAD A PLEASANT CHAT WITH A LOCAL GIRL...

THE REASON FOR THIS IS THE MEREST TRIFLE.

DON (BOOM)

NI

DODON (KABOOM)

NI NI

...SHE CAN ONLY MEET THEIR BEAUTY WITH A MELAN-CHOLY EXPRES-SION.

AS ERI GAZES UP AT THE FIRE-WORKS THAT MARK THE FINALE ...

WHEN DID SUCH DISTANCE COME BETWEEN US?

I HAVE NO STRENGTHS, NO CHARMS, NO POSITION OF MY OWN. IT HAS ALL BEEN BESTOWED UPON ME.

ERI WANTED TO CUT IN, BUT SHE REFRAINED IN THE END.

I UNDER-STAND... HE BELONGS TO THAT WORLD.

ERI!

ERI, OVER HERE!

WHEN WE WERE LITTLE, WE WERE ALWAYS TOGETH-ER...

BUT THEN...

ERIRI!

OVER HERE!

TOMOYA, WHAT ARE YOU DOING ...?

HUH ...?

IT'S BEEN A WHILE. SHALL WE GO INTO TOWN?

SHH! NOT SO LOUD!

.....

ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO BE HOLY KNIGHT SERVIS FROM *LITRHAP* ...?

WHAT ARE YOU —?

...ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO BE SERVIS?

LET'S BE OFF, THEN! WE'LL TAKE IN THE END OF THE FESTIVAL TOGETHER!

PLEASE CALL ME TOMOYA TONIGHT... YOUR HIGH-NESS.

DOOON (BAM)

... AREN'T YOU EMBAR-RASSED TO BE DOING THIS?

I AM INDEED!

SO MUCH, I COULD DIE!

AND KATOU PUT THE PLAN INTO ACTION.

I BORROWED THIS OUTFIT FROM A COSPLAYER THROUGH IORI'S CONNEC-TIONS.

I GOT HER PARENTS' OKAY TODAY AT HER COMIKET TABLE.

BUT!

UTAHA-SENPAI THOUGHT UP THIS SCENARIO FOR ME.

WHY DO I HAVE TO HELP OUT THE COMPETI-TION?

I'M NOT READY TO DIE YET!

IT TOOK THE HELP OF A LOT OF PEOPLE FOR TONIGHT'S OPERATION TO BE A GO.

AND THAT'S WHY...

NOT UNTIL WE MEND OUR FRIEND-SHIP!

TOMOYA ...

カサカサカサカサ

GASA (RUSTLE)

GASA

GASA

...AGH!

ERIRI! COME ON!

IT'S ALL RIGHT! HER UNCLE SAKAKI'S IN ON IT TOO!

GA (GRAB)

HEY, YOU! WHAT ARE YOU DOING THERE!?

U-UNCLE SAKAKI? I CAN EX—

RIGHT! THESE ARE LINES FROM THE SERVIS ROUTE!

"TO-MOYA... FLEE WITH-OUT ME!"

OH!

CAN YOU TOUGH IT OUT FOR JUST A BIT?

UH-HUH ...

"I THINK I'VE TWISTED MY ANKLE!"

"OH! OW, OW, OUCH ...!

OH NO!

ARE YOU OKAY !?

THEY... REBUILT IT... A YEAR AGO... I'M PRETTY SURE...
THE SCHOOL BUILDING... IT'S ALL NEW.
SIGN: SHIMAMURA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
小学校

WELL, IT'S A PUBLIC SCHOOL.

MAYBE THEY DID, BUT THIS SCHOOL STILL SUCKS.

SO THE TWISTED ANKLE REALLY WAS JUST AN ACT, HUH...?

RRGH ...!

UGH, YOU WUSS.

SUTA すた

SUTA (STEP) たすた

I'LL CATCH YOUR FOUR-EYES DISEASE!

DON'T COME ANY CLOSER, OTAKU!

THAT WHOLE SCENE BEFORE... YOU DIDN'T COME UP WITH IT YOURSELF, DID YOU?

NOT REALLY.

UTAHA KASUMI-GAOKA?

AND KATOU, I GUESS.

SHE'S THE ONE WHO SUGGESTED *LITRHAP*.

YOU'RE A COWARD, TOMOYA...

YUP.

HOW CAN WE PATCH THIS UP NOW?

ERIRI...

IT WAS THE FIRST TITLE YOU EVER MADE ME GO CRAZY ABOUT.

AND USING *LITRHAP* AS A PRETEXT WAS EVEN WORSE.

GETTING EVERYONE TO HELP WAS GUTLESS.

BETTER YET, ITS AUTHOR IS AN OLD FRIEND AND YOUR NUMBER ONE DISCIPLE... HOW NICE FOR YOU.

YOU MUST BE GLAD YOU DISCOVERED A GOOD BOOK.

NO, THAT—

TOMOYA, YOU LOOKED AT HER WITH THE SAME GAGA EYES YOU DO WITH UTAHA KASUMIGAOKA.

AND NOW IT'S BECOME THE THING THAT CONNECTS YOU AND THAT IZUMI GIRL.

IF I HADN'T INTRODUCED YOU TO *LITRHAP* ...

IF I'D NEVER MET YOU —!

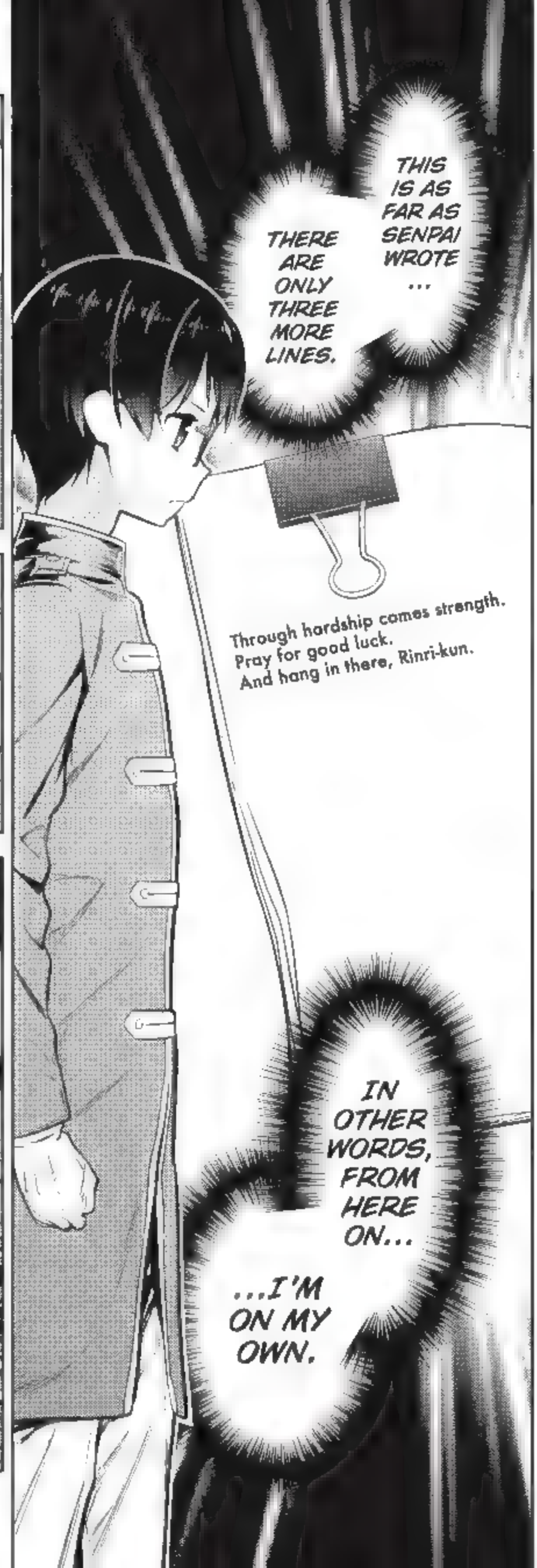
IT'S ALL THANKS TO ME, ISN'T IT...!?

BUT THIS IS—

DO YOU JUST WANT ME TO APOLOGIZE?
IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT NOW...

...SO YOU'RE NOT GONNA SAY SORRY EITHER?
HUHN ...!?

FOR WHAT YOU DID TO ME SEVEN YEARS AGO... IS IT TOO LATE FOR THAT TOO?
WHAT THE HELL!? WHAT DID I DO TO YOU!?


THIS IS AS FAR AS SENPAI WROTE ...
THERE ARE ONLY THREE MORE LINES.
Through hardship comes strength.
Pray for good luck.
And hang in there, Rinri-kun.
IN OTHER WORDS, FROM HERE ON...
...I'M ON MY OWN.

ALL THOSE YEARS, I NEVER SAID THIS, BUT...
...I REALLY HATED YOU!

WE HAD FUN TALKING ABOUT GAMES AND ANIME EVERY DAY...

...BUT THOSE KIDS KEPT BUGGING US...

YOU...

...REALLY LET THEIR BULLYING GET TO YOU.

NYAH-HA! SHE HATES YOU!

NOW SHE HATES YOU!

BUT I STUCK IT OUT.

I MADE LOTS OF GEEK FRIENDS, PUT UP WITH THE ANNOYED ADULTS, AND SHUT THOSE KIDS UP.

I REBUILT OUR OTAKU KINGDOM.

B L

NO ONE'S GONNA TEASE US ANY-MORE!
LET'S TALK AGAIN!
ABOUT ANIME AND GAMES AND STUFF!

POPULAR GIRLS GROUP
BUT EVEN SO...
ERIRI!

...

...AND I'D HAVE BEEN ABANDONED BY THE NEW FRIENDS I'D MADE.
IF I HAD, EVERYONE WOULD'VE STOPPED TALKING TO ME AGAIN...
BUT YOU HAD ME! WASN'T I YOUR FRIEND ...?
...DIDN'T MEAN I COULD GO BACK TO MY OLD SELF...
JUST 'COS YOU SAID THAT...
LET'S GO, GIRLS!

YOU EVEN STARTED MAKING STUFF FOR US!

YOU DIDN'T GIVE IT UP!

BUT SOMEONE COULD'VE WRECKED THAT ALL OVER AGAIN!

SO I HAD TO GIVE UP BEING AN OTAKU!

I HAD TO STOP TALKING TO YOU, TOMOYA!

THEN WHY DID YOU CAST ME ASIDE!?

AND I HAD TO REALLY HIDE IT!

I MADE SO SURE THAT NO ONE EVER FOUND OUT!

ARE YOU SAYING WE WOULDN'T HAVE ENDED UP LIKE THIS IF YOU HAD!?

IF I'D TALKED TO YOU, IT WOULD'VE GOTTEN OUT THAT I WAS STILL AN OTAKU ...!

IT WOULD'VE SPREAD THROUGH THE GIRLS, AND I'D BE ALL ALONE AGAIN!

YOU WOULDN'T GO INTO HIDING WITH ME!

YOU WOULDN'T STOP EVEN ON THE SURFACE!

WHY WOULD I!?

APOLOGIZE!

IT'S NOT ABOUT WHAT WAS MORE OR LESS IMPORT-ANT!

SO MEANINGLESS TITTERING WITH THOSE TWO-FACED, SHALLOW PEOPLE WAS MORE IMPORTANT THAN TALKING ABOUT ANIME WITH ME!?

WHY DID YOU TREAT ME THAT WAY ...?

YOU WERE WRONG!

TSUU (DRIP)

WHY DID Y—

... WHAT THE —?

T-TOMO-YA?

I WON'T... NOT EVER.

I WON'T APOLO-GIZE, NO MATTER WHAT.

APOLO-GIZE... APOLO-GIZE!

ARGH ...! ERIRI... Y-YOU IDIOT...

N-NO ...!

CRAAAP ...!

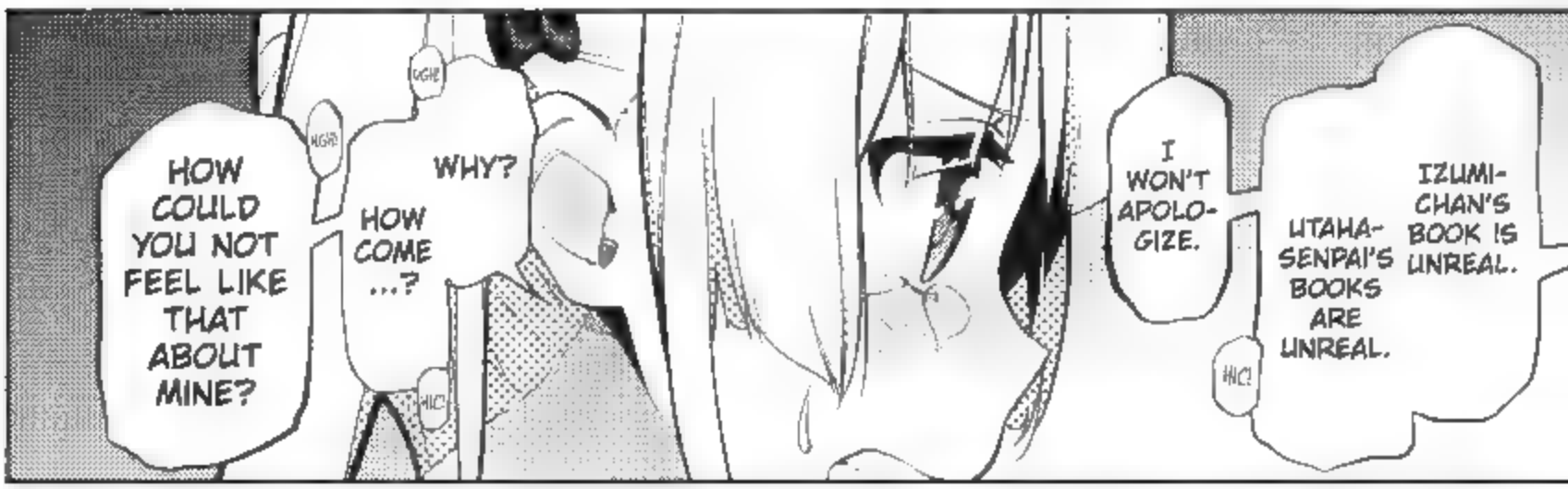
TOMOYA ...

... DON'T YOU KNOW ...

...HOW MUCH I CRIED ...!?

IF YOU WON'T APOL-OGIZE, THEN I WON'T EITHER.
GUH!

ZUZU (SNIFFLE)


HOW COULD YOU NOT FEEL LIKE THAT ABOUT MINE?
HGH!
WHY? HOW COME ...?
GGH!
HIC!
I WON'T APOLO-GIZE.
HIC!
UTAHA-SENPAI'S BOOKS ARE UNREAL.
IZUMI-CHAN'S BOOK IS UNREAL.

ARE YOU SAYING IT MAKES ME LESS THAN THAT KID?
HIC!
WELL, WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT!?
HIC!
YOU DRAW EXACTLY WHAT I WANNA SEE.
IT'S JUST WHAT YOU EXPECT.
'COS I UNDER-STAND YOUR BOOK.
HIC!

I'M THROUGH PULLING PUNCHES—
WHA—!?
YES, IT DOES! YOU'RE LESS THAN HER! YOU'RE INFERIOR! YOU'RE NO GOOD!

YOU LACK TRUE TAL-ENT!
YOUR ART AND STORIES FAIL TO DEFY EXPEC-TATION IN ANY WAY!
THERE ARE NO SURPRISES AT ALL!
WHY SHOULD I GET EXCITED ABOUT THAT!?
AND IT'S ALWAYS BEEN THIS WAY! SKILLS ALONE AREN'T ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU AWESOME!
LOOKING AT YOUR ART PISSES ME OFF LIKE NOBODY'S BUSINESS!

BIKI

BIKI (SNAP)

AND IF I'M STILL NOT GOOD ENOUGH, THEN WHAT AM I S'POSED TO DO!?

WHAT DO I DO IF I DON'T HAVE ANY TALENT !?

GA (GRAB)

I'M WORKING AS HARD AS I CAN!

I'M PUTTING MYSELF THROUGH THE WRINGER IN WAYS YOU KNOW AND DON'T KNOW ABOUT!

BUT RIGHT NOW, YOU'RE LACKING! YOU'RE NOT AWE-SOME!

I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'VE GOT TALENT, AND I DON'T KNOW HOW HARD YOU'VE STRUG-GLED!

HOW THE HELL SHOULD I KNOW!?

BUT I STILL WANTED TO PROVE MYSELF!

I WANTED TO HAVE MY REVENGE, AND IN THIS END, THIS IS WHERE I AM, SEE!?

I CAN'T PUSH MY-SELF ANY-MORE!

I TRIED AS HARD AS I COULD! I HID IT FROM EVERY-ONE—

STAY FAST, STAY GOOD, STAY CONSIS-TENT, BUT SHOW ME YOU CAN BE AMAZING TOO!

SO NOW BECOME AWE-SOME!

YES! THIS IS HOW FAR YOU'VE COME! YOU'RE FAST, YOU'RE GOOD, YOU'RE CONSISTENT!

NONE OF THAT MATTERS! YOU EITHER WORK EVEN HARDER THAN YOU DO NOW, OR ONE DAY, MAYBE YOU'LL JUST BLOSSOM OUT OF THE BLUE! LET ME SEE IT HAPPEN!

I CAN'T! I'VE REACHED THE LIMIT OF MY TALENT!

TH... THAT'S ...

...EASY ENOUGH TO SAY...

BUT HOW DO I WORK HARDER THAN I AM NOW?

HOW DO I MAKE MY TALENT BLOOM?

DON'T ASK ME. WORK IT OUT FOR YOUR-SELF.

THINK. THEN THINK SOME MORE.

FIGHT. AND FIGHT SOME MORE.

WIN, WIN, WIN...

OF COURSE I WILL.
OBVI-OUSLY.
I'LL TAKE THE FIRST TRAIN AND BE FIRST IN LINE TO BUY THEM.
THEN I'LL GO TO THE BACK OF THE LINE TO LINE UP AND BUY THEM AGAIN.
AGAIN AND AGAIN, IN AN ENDLESS LOOP, UNTIL YOU'RE SOLD OUT.
AND I'LL GIVE THEM TO ALL MY FRIENDS TO GET THE WORD OUT...
AND THEN ...
... FINALLY I'LL SAY—

"Y'KNOW, KASHI-WAGI-SENSEI IS A FRIEND OF MINE!"
OKAY!?

TOMO-YA...
THAT'S ...

HMPH.
YOU DOUJIN EX-PLOIT-ER.

I'LL DO IT.....!
I'LL DRAW SO WELL, EVERYONE WILL HAVE TO ADMIT I'M AWESOME!

SHALL WE GO HOME, TOMOYA?

I MEAN, SERVIS.

OH...!

'COS WE'VE LOOKED AHEAD AND TAKEN OUR FIRST STEP FORWARD.

LET'S!

TO BE CONTINUED

How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend

How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend

THE
"MEGU-TAN
APPEARANCE FIRST"
SECTION
(ETC.)
YADDA
YADDA
PART 3
JERSEY AND BLOOMERS

TRANSLATION NOTES

(usually) by amateurs and derivative of existing properties.

PAGE 45
Kouhai, a companion word to *senpai*, is used when talking about one's underclassman, junior, or protégé. It can be used in academic, business, or team settings.

PAGE 46
Miiin is the sound effect for the chirping or buzzing of cicadas, the presence of which is very evocative of summer in Japan.

PAGE 66
A **ward** (*ku*) is a subdivision of a Japanese city as decided by the government.

PAGE 73
Clear files are folders made from durable plastic sealed on two sides for housing a few sheets of paper (standard size is A4). They are often sold as fan goods for anime and manga series and feature key art from those series.

PAGE 75
When Izumi mistakenly refers to Megumi as **Kamo-san**, Tomoya starts thinking wordplay. In Japanese name order, Megumi is Katou Megumi. Taking Izumi's blooper into account, it becomes Kamo Megumi, which sounds just like *kamome-gumi*. This means "sea gull group" and could be either a company or circle name, or the name given to a kindergarten class (often named after animals and plants).

PAGE 98
The **age of legal adulthood in Japan** is twenty years old, and pornographic material is often restricted from those under eighteen, so

COMMON HONORIFICS
no honorific: Indicates familiarity or closeness; if used without permission or reason, addressing someone in this manner would constitute an insult.
-san: The Japanese equivalent of Mr./Mrs./Miss. If a situation calls for politeness, this is the fail-safe honorific.
-sama: Conveys great respect; may also indicate that the social status of the speaker is lower than that of the addressee.
-kun: Used most often when referring to boys, this indicates affection or familiarity. Occasionally used by older men among their peers, but it may also be used by anyone referring to a person of lower standing.
-chan (also *-tan*): An affectionate honorific indicating familiarity used mostly in reference to girls; also used in reference to cute persons or animals of either gender.
-senpai: An honorific used to address upperclassmen or more experienced coworkers.
-sensei: A respectful honorific for teachers, artists, or high-level professionals.

PAGE 38
The **mock trial** here is an homage to the *Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney* video game franchise from Capcom, from the jabbing objections to the brushy interjection balloons that continue up to the appearance of Izumi.

PAGE 43
Comiket, a portmanteau of Comic Market, is the world's largest *doujinshi* fair. Founded in 1975, it is now held twice a year (August and December) in Tokyo and draws crowds exceeding 500,000 heads per show.

PAGE 43
Doujinshi (*doujin*, for short) is self-published art, comics, video games, or novels produced

TRANSLATION NOTES

pretty much everyone in the story is too young to be reading Eriri's *doujinshi*, including Eriri herself! She would also not be allowed to sell her work, but she has help from her dad, as she mentioned in Volume 1.

PAGE 99

The **cosplay outfit** shown here belongs to Shimakaze from *Kantai* ("Fleet") *Collection* (*KanColle*), a Japanese web game that involves collecting cards of sailing vessels—anthropomorphized as pretty girls—in order to build squadrons. The character is based on the one-of-a-kind Japanese destroyer of the same name built by the Imperial Japanese Army in World War II.

PAGE 129

Obon is a Buddhist festival to celebrate the spirits of one's ancestors. It lasts three days and typically falls in July.

PAGE 131

Tsundere is a compound term derived from the words *tsuntsun* ("disdainful, prickly") and *deredere* ("affectionate, fawning") that refers to a person who is initially abrasive or combative but softens over time or reveals a warm inner nature.

PAGE 131

Itasha is the word for a car that has been decorated all over with anime decals and so on.

HOW TO RAISE A BORING GIRLFRIEND 3

TAKESHI MORIKI
Original Story: FUMIAKI MARUTO
Character Design: KUREHITO MISAKI

Translation: Kumar Sivasubramanian
Translation Consultant: Chitoku Teshima
Lettering: Phil Christie

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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